

Considering collaboration and 'crodswoogle'

Terry Hanley

PICTURE IT IF YOU WILL. The hallways of a grand office block are adorned with a beautiful, heart warming image of business people punching the air celebrating their first major success of the day. Underneath the image is the slogan – There is no 'I' in 'team'. For me (TH) such imagery leads to a faint whiff of sadness entering my soul and, for a relatively peace loving man, I feel a little more violent towards my fellow human 'beans'. Essentially, what utter 'crodswoogle!' (yes, maybe I've been reading too much of the *BFG* (Dahl, 1982) to my eldest son, Arthur).

Now, I realise that my editorials are often a little tangential, and potentially this is a step too far. However, I think there is a relevant point about collaborative working somewhere waiting to come to fruition. Please stick with me for a moment as, in my head at least, the point relates to the worlds of counselling psychology, research and developments within in *Counselling Psychology Review*. Let's consider them in turn and you can assess if I'm talking 'crodswoogle' too.

The world of counselling psychology often finds itself challenging the sentiments of reductive models of psychological health care and promotes a more holistic attitude towards therapeutic practice (e.g. Woolfe, 1990). In doing so, we might advocate more 'research informed', rather than 'research directed' approaches (e.g. Bohart, 2005; Hanley et al., in press). Such sentiments acknowledge that ethical decision making in therapeutic practice is incredibly complex and best practice is likely to be responsive to the needs of those people that we meet looking for support. The recent edition of the American Psychological Society's *Psychotherapy Relationships That Work: Evidence-Based*

Responsiveness (Norcross, 2011) provides quite a substantial basis to such a sentiment. For interest, the recommendations for practice in this text are:

- Practitioners are encouraged to make the creation and cultivation of a therapy relationship, characterised by the elements found to be demonstrably and probably effective, a primary aim in the treatment of patients.
- Practitioners are encouraged to adapt or tailor psychotherapy to those specific patient characteristics in ways found to be demonstrably and probably effective
- Practitioners are encouraged to routinely monitor patients' responses to the therapy relationship and ongoing treatment. Such monitoring leads to increased opportunities to re-establish collaboration, improve relationships, and avoid premature termination.
- Concurrent use of evidence-based therapy relationships and evidence-based treatments adapted to the patient is likely to generate best outcomes.

(Norcross & Wampold, 2011, p.424)

A major challenge to taking this more responsive stance is to display that it has substance and foundation. Essentially, how do we know that what we are doing isn't 'crodswoogle' and we are not being directed by our subjective misguided whims? Now this becomes a complex endeavour and we look to terms such as the 'scientist-practitioner' (see Blair, 2011) or 'reflexive practice' (see Hedges, 2010) for some foundation. Clearly there is not time here to expand upon these concepts in great detail, but inherent within this stance is the need to engage with practice-based evidence (used in its broadest sense) and consider our work in supervision.

Thus, the way we make sense of what we do is not undertaken in a vacuum and thoughtful collaboration becomes an important part of our 'crodswoogle' safe guarding process.

In research, similar safeguarding processes can be seen in action. Increasingly, within all paradigms of research, the importance of transparency proves important. The concept of 'trustworthiness' often talked about in relation to qualitative work (e.g. Bond, 2004), can also help people to make sense of quantitative research (although I appreciate this is a less developed area). Such a notion often encourages people to engage in a dialogue about the data that they have generated/made sense of. The purpose of this dialogue is once again to avoid producing a final piece of research that is 'crodswoogle'. Such checks might take place within research supervision, alongside co-researchers or as a form of member check with participants (dependent upon your preferred type of research). Ultimately, whatever the synthesis arrived at, it will reflect one view of the data, and I guess we all hope that this view will have some foundation, utility and credence. Interestingly, a contemporary way of considering this issue looks to pro-actively make this process more systematic and looks towards assessing data using a jury system (e.g. Bohart et al., 2011). This will not be an appealing method for all (for numerous reasons including the logistics of getting more people involved in data analysis) but it displays a fascinating collaborative way of tackling the proliferation of 'crodswoogle'.

You are probably now a little sick of the BFG references and so I will stop for a moment at least to briefly move us to consider developments in *Counselling Psychology Review*. Here the topic of collaboration within this editorial should, however, become apparent. As a publication that is produced primarily through voluntary commitments (editing, peer reviewing, etc.) it has become necessary to pull in more support to maintain its quality and support its developing profile. With this in mind, I am

incredibly pleased to announce that we now have two Associate Editors who will be helping to create the publication four times a year. From my perspective, it is great to have two new individuals help to steer what has become quite a cumbersome vessel and their energy and experience will greatly complement the established Editorial Board. I welcome them both aboard and look forward to collaboratively working with them over the next few years. I will, however, let them introduce themselves.

Denis O'Hara

As a new member of the Editorial Team it is appropriate that I introduce myself and make a few comments about how I aim to contribute to *Counselling Psychology Review*. I would first like to say how pleased I am to be offered an opportunity to add to the discipline of counselling psychology through editorial support of the Division's research publication. My pleasure is also mixed with some trepidation about the challenge ahead but I'm hopeful that some arousal of the fight-flight response might prove to be beneficial.

I would like to say at the outset that I am passionate about the contribution that counselling psychology can make to clients and wider society. I believe that counselling psychology is in a somewhat unique position as a helping profession due to its inclusive philosophy which values knowledge gained via natural scientific, and humanistic or social scientific means. The openness of the reflexive practitioner model to multiple epistemologies provides a holistic view of humanness which, in turn, provides the counselling psychologist optimal capacity to support human health and well-being. Counselling psychology has always had to work hard to substantiate its unique contribution to psychology, and while much has been achieved, there is more to be done. The juggernaut of the evidence-based practice paradigm threatens to steamroll over any questioners who ask what is meant by the term evidence. Of course, our professional

determination is that our therapeutic interventions be supported by rigorous evidence but the type of evidence that is consistent with our philosophical commitments, not the commitments of some other discipline or sub-discipline. While we greatly value an inclusive ethic of shared knowledge from all disciplines, we are more able to express this ethic from a position of secured identity. Even though there is still resistance to a broader view of what research evidence is deemed appropriate for the discipline of psychology, there are also encouraging signs that the evidence provided by a synthesis of multiple methodological sources is becoming more accepted. This growth in awareness is greatly increased by academic/practitioner publications like *Counselling Psychology Review*.

In thinking about how to support and promote counselling psychology within the UK, it seems obvious that encouraging links and dialogue within the profession in other countries is a worthy endeavour. In recent issues of the publication, healthy challenges about the nature of counselling psychology in the UK have been offered. The indigenous form that counselling psychology has taken in the UK has a unique quality which greatly adds to the wider development of the field in other countries. Equally, the experience of the profession in other jurisdictions has much to add to our own. I am keen to draw contributions to the publication from further afield which inform us of other perspectives and add to debate.

As may already be evident, I have an interest in the philosophical foundations upon which counselling psychology is built or is being built. I believe that it is essential that we are keenly aware of our philosophical assumptions for it is out of these that we practice. Finding a balance between healthy debate at this level and also keeping a focus on the daily practice of counselling psychology is important. With a well established Editorial Team, a strong list of advisors and contributors, I am confident that such a balance will be maintained.

Edith Steffen

I feel amazed and excited that I have been appointed Honorary Associate Editor of *Counselling Psychology Review*. It is a huge honour for me to be given this role in our professional community, raising a good deal of anxiety as well as hope, particularly as I am at a very early stage in my post-qualification life. However, I would like to set out with confidence and introduce myself in this editorial by briefly describing my background and what I am hoping to bring to this role.

As regards my official status and positioning, I am a chartered and HPC registered counselling psychologist and a recent graduate of the PsychD programme in Psychotherapeutic and Counselling Psychology at the University of Surrey where my research was supervised by Adrian Coyle. I am currently an Associate Lecturer at The Open University, teaching social psychology, introduction to counselling and critical perspectives on mental health, and a research supervisor at the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling.

To describe who I am with regard to an editing role in this publication, I see myself as firmly grounded in the discipline of counselling psychology and its philosophical underpinnings, specifically its humanistic value base (Milton, Craven & Coyle, 2010), contextualised stance (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010) and pluralistic outlook (McAteer, 2010). I bring with me a deep passion for academic research, scholarship, exchange and debate and the contribution research can make not only to practice but also to the wider pursuit of knowledge and understanding from a counselling psychology perspective. I am hoping to facilitate and encourage publications that are inspired as well as inspiring and to help produce top-quality output to advance the profession's reputation within its own ranks, within the wider field of applied psychology and also within more 'purist' academic circles. It is my belief that excellent research comes from inspiration paired with rigour and dedication, that researchers who have the freedom to pursue what they are

truly excited about and care about deeply, using appropriate – and this could mean innovative – methods, will be more fired up about their research and more likely to produce work that develops understanding, stimulates debate, advances the discipline and has impact beyond the printed page and beyond the discipline.

My interest in research is not only substantive in nature. With a background in translating and editing, I have a long-standing interest in the ‘craft’ of writing, which includes not just the technical but also the creative, constructive and contextual side of text production. This links with my interest in qualitative research methodologies, and I subscribe to the basic tenet that the very writing (up) of the research is part of the research itself and not merely an afterthought to it. I therefore hope that my linguistic eye can also be of service to the publication.

One of my tasks as Associate Editor of *Counselling Psychology Review* is to organise the peer review process. Peer reviewers play a key role in raising and maintaining the standard of an academic publication. It is thanks to their freely given and publicly unacknowledged dedicated scrutiny of submitted papers that such a publication can thrive, and it will be a particular pleasure and honour for me to forge links with current and future reviewers, to encourage and support their most valued contribution and to act as a point of interchange in the creation of what is already an outstanding publication and which promises to be continuously raising its standard and significance.

An overview of this edition

Without further ado, the contents of this edition are briefly outlined below in turn. Along the way are numerous advertisements for events and prizes related to the Division of Counselling Psychology here within the UK. I hope that you feel inclined and welcomed to submit something for these awards.

We start this edition with two prize-winning trainee papers. These were the two

2011 prize-winning entries for the Division’s Trainee prize. The first of these comes from Patrick Larsson and focuses upon the importance of understanding the client’s early attachment experience to the psychodynamic practice of counselling psychology. This theoretical paper provides much to think about and plenty to get your teeth into when considering the nuances of the therapeutic relationship. In contrast to this comes a much more politically-minded piece of writing from the joint trainee prize winner. Here Anne-Marie Lewis discusses the impact of the creation of an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service on an existing psychological therapies department, an important issue that has not received a great deal of attention given the magnitude of these new developments.

In the next section, I’m slightly sad to say we have our lone research paper for this edition. Although the plethora of theoretical papers provides plenty to fill the pages of *Counselling Psychology Review* with interesting material, it is notable that we do not receive many research papers of sufficient quality to be published. Here, however, we have a very interesting piece of work by Elaine Beaumont, Adam Galpin and Peter Jenkins comparing cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with CBT and compassionate mind training (CMT). Do enjoy this paper and, if you have conducted a piece of research recently, do contemplate submitting it to us.

The next three papers reflect issues at the heart of counselling psychology philosophy and theory. We begin with Panagiotis Pappas’s paper critiquing the use of standard psychopathological classifications in understanding human distress. In particular this paper uses the category of ‘schizoid personality disorder’ to harness the discussions that are made. The second paper within this section continues along the lines of examining the relationship that counselling psychologists have with models of psychopathology. In this instance, Charles Frost reflects upon the way that pluralism might provide a useful means of navigating between the humanism

and the medical model. The final paper has been written by one of our new Associate Editors (prior to accepting the role I feel I should add), Denis O'Hara, and reflects upon the different philosophical assumptions between traditional research-based knowledge and practice-based knowledge. Interestingly, this also considers the concept of tacit knowledge for the second edition of this publication in a row, with the previous edition considering this in relation to research (see West, 2011).

The Dialogues and Debates section of this edition has two offerings. Firstly we have a response to a paper published in an earlier edition of *Counselling Psychology Review* by Jane Simms (Simms, 2011). This paper looked at the potentially controversial issue of formulation within Person-Centred Therapy. In response to this paper Professor Ewan Gillon has provided an informed a thoughtful follow-up to this paper. Finally, we end with a book review of Roger Grainger's book entitled *Faith, Hope and Therapy: Counselling with St. Paul* by Adam Scott.

There is no 'I' in 'team' revisited

As is evident from the above, this is another packed edition of *Counselling Psychology Review*. Over the next year we will have some more special editions for you to enjoy and I personally look forward to seeing how the publication develops with the involvement of new individuals. Before embracing 2012

fully, however, it is important to acknowledge the hard work and contributions for all of those individuals who have undertaken peer reviews for the publication during 2011. For your time and effort I thank you. I end still detesting motivational posters, but whole heartedly acknowledge that without collegiate collaborative efforts the pages of *Counselling Psychology Review* would consist of much more 'crodswoogle'.

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