THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF A PEER COUNSELLOR TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by

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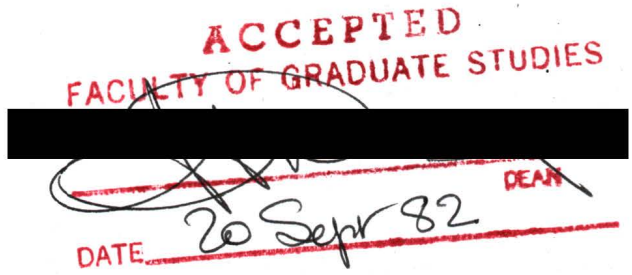

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ABSTRACT

Peer counselling has received attention as more school counsellors realize the value of incorporating the student-helping-student model into their programmes. Although the literature encourages secondary school counsellors to implement peer counselling concepts, little empirical support exists for the peer counselling concepts.

This study developed a systematic peer counsellor training programme for use with secondary school students. The effectiveness of the training programme, as measured by accurate empathy, and changes in self-esteem of the peer counsellors was assessed within a pre-test-posttest control group design.

Analysis of covariance yielded significant results for the trainees' acquisition of facilitative skills; however, significant results were not obtained on either aspect of the self-esteem assessment.

Recommendations for future research and implications for the present study for school counsellors and field staff were discussed.

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TO JACK AND JANET

CHAPTER ONE

During the past few years, peer counselling has received increased attention as school counsellors began to realize the value of using students as helpers. Studies have shown that peer counsellors have been used effectively at the college level in areas of academic and emotional adjustment (Brown, 1965, 1972; Allen, 1974; Dana, 1974; Leventhal et al., 1976; Dann et al., 1977). Other studies indicate that peer counsellors can deal effectively with the social and personal problems of their peers (Wolf, 1969; Kern & Kirby, 1971; Mosher & Sprinthall, 1971; Etkin & Snyder, 1972; Gravitz & Woods, 1976). Peer counselling programmes have also been introduced into secondary and elementary schools (Hamburg & Varenhorst, 1972; Samuels & Samuels, 1975; Myrick & Erney, 1978).

Although the literature encourages school counsellors to implement peer counselling concepts and programmes, investigation of those concepts appears limited. Generally, the research at the secondary school level has been vague and lacking in empirical sophistication, with many of the claims unsubstantiated or relying heavily on subjective evaluation. Also in the research there is little mention of specific training methods used, and of those that are mentioned, little evaluative information is included.

The situation is best demonstrated in studies by Sussman (1973) and Crooker and Cherchia (1976). Both studies show that secondary

school students are capable of learning facilitative skills; however, their references to specific training methods are vague or unobtainable. Neither programme used a systematic training format as suggested by Carkhuff (1969), and Sussman (1973) emphasized increasing awareness of self and of others rather than skill development. Consequently, research on peer counsellor training at the secondary school level that combines sound empirical methods with a systematic peer counsellor training programme is virtually non-existent.

Therefore, the overall goal of this research is to develop a systematic training programme for use with secondary school students, and to make such a programme available to interested researchers and counsellors along with specific information and references that they can use in developing other programmes.

More specifically, the goals of this thesis are: (1) to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme, focusing on the acquisition of accurate empathic listening skills; and (2) to begin to assess the behavioral effects of the training on the peer counsellors, focusing on the changes, if any, in the self-esteem of the students who participate in the training programme.

This combined approach is particularly important to counselling (practitioners, field personnel, trainers, etc.), because it gives the person working in the field practical, objective information and/or methods for deciding whether to accept or to reject a peer counselling programme.

CHAPTER TWO

Since peer counselling is a relatively new idea, the origins of which have been described elsewhere (Carr, 1981), the purpose of this chapter is to provide and discuss a definition of peer counselling, a rationale for implementing a peer counselling programme, and to look at the types and the quality of empirical research to date.

Definition of Peer Counselling

Peer counselling is defined as a learning situation in which students listen to and help facilitate the growth and development of other students; that is, it is a process in which trained and supervised students offer listening, support and alternatives, but little or no advice, to students seeking help.

A peer counsellor is someone who cares about others and who talks to them about their thoughts and feelings. Rather than being an "advice-giver" or a "problem-solver," a peer counsellor is a sensitive listener who uses communication skills to facilitate self-exploration and decision-making. The peer counsellor is neither a therapist nor a professional counsellor. Peer counsellors are supervised students who have been trained to help other students think through and reflect on problems they might be experiencing (Carr & Saunders, 1979).

The Rationale for Implementing a Peer Counselling Programme

Peer counselling has never been suggested as a replacement for traditional counselling services. It best serves as a supplement because: (1) Peer counsellors can extend the counselling services available; they can become a "human link" between the students and the professionals. If the goal of reaching each student is to be realized, traditional methods of counselling will not work--simply because of a lack of resources, both financial and professional. (2) Peer counsellors can provide a practical and economical means for assisting with the increasing number of guidance and counselling services. (3) Peers may have a greater capacity for empathy towards one another than professionals to clients (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967; Carkhuff, 1969). Students know how to talk to students; they do it all day long. A trained student peer counsellor can establish peer-like relations with students needing help, take an active part in the student's total life situation, empathize more effectively with the student's style of life, and teach the student, within the student's own frame of reference, more successful actions (Carkhuff, 1969). (4) Peers model each other's behavior and establish norms as standards of conduct that can have a beneficial effect amongst peers (Schweisheimer & Walberg, 1976). During adolescence the peer group is the "significant other" from which approval is sought; so, the use of positive peer models can only be a positive force and another alternative to reaching understanding within a school population.

(5) Peer counselling is a double-level approach that can enhance personal growth in the peer counsellors as well as the counselees (Riesman, 1965; Varenhorst, 1973; Samuels & Samuels, 1975; Myrick & Erney, 1978). (6) The use of peer counsellors may reduce student resistance to seeking help for their problems or concerns. In a survey of 1,774 students, representing ten secondary schools throughout British Columbia, Carr (1978) noted that 60 to 70 per cent of the students polled stated that they would not consult a school counsellor about problems related to sex, drugs, or drinking.

More specifically, only 14.5 per cent of the 11th and 12th grade students said they would see a school counsellor about loneliness; only 22 per cent would see a counsellor about drugs; 13 per cent about alcohol; and 25 per cent about emotional concerns (Carr, 1978). Also, if attention is paid to selection processes and the existing social network of the school, peer counsellors are less likely to be seen as part of the authority-establishment (Carr, 1980). According to Carr (1980) peer counsellors, even though experiencing counsellor training and interest, are very unlikely to form a social group of their own, instead they remain integral members of their own social network.

Whatever the rationale for implementing a peer counselling programme, whether it is to deal with drug abuse, violence, apathy, or the extension of the counselling services, its underlying concept is the same. Basically, there is no way to prevent students from helping other students. They share their thoughts and feelings as part of "going to school." Instituting a peer counselling programme

is an attempt to enhance the process of student interaction rather than to inhibit it. Students are taught skills that increase their ability to help themselves and others. The mystery of "what really helps" is eliminated and in its place, concrete, shareable skills are learned.

A major objective of peer counselling programmes is to increase the number of people in a school who have learned skills specifically to help others express and deal effectively with their problems and concerns. Hopefully, a programme such as this will encourage students with drug-related, peer-related, and other types of problems to communicate with peers in a meaningful and authentic way. Such communication will provide a means of helping students to cope with the basic pressures of development and of life in general. It is believed that with this opportunity to find new and more constructive means of dealing with themselves and their environment, students will be able to reduce personal conflicts, both within themselves and with others--struggles that may lead to drug abuse or other destructive coping behaviors.

Types and Quality of Research

In an extensive review of the literature, Scott and Warner,Jr. (1974), found that much of the interest in peer counselling was in the form of subjective thought articles, with very few articles reporting any attempt of objective evaluation. They discovered that of the vast array of articles studied, only 61 mentioned evaluation.

Of these, many were discarded as inconclusive because the evaluation consisted of a subjective "I feel" or "we feel" format.

The reviewers also noticed that if training methods/programmes were mentioned, they generally involved the development of interpersonal and/or human relations skills, and that the majority of the programmes were loosely based upon Carkhuff's (1969) model for human relations training. Here again, little evaluative information is available as to the effectiveness of the training approaches.

In their review, Scott and Warner Jr., identified seven studies in peer counselling at the junior/senior secondary school level. The articles they surveyed showed evidence of conflicting outcomes with peer counselling. Engle and Szyperski (1965), and Margro (1973), found little difference in anxiety and self-concepts between students functioning as peer counsellors and their "clients." Also, Parker (1973), reported no difference in the concepts of self and others found among peer-counselled, professionally counselled, and control group groups of ninth grade students. In contrast to these findings, Vriend (1969), Lobitz (1970), Hamburg and Varenhorst (1972), and Koch (1973), all reported highly significant changes in academic, social and personal areas of student concerns.

Other evaluative studies available at the time of the review by Scott and Warner Jr. and later, although mainly positive in their outcomes, have quite different levels of sophistication both in research design and in results. The research covers such topics as: general support for a peer counselling programme; effects on counselees after seeing peer counsellors; self-concept and facilitative

changes in peer counsellors; and the acquisition of facilitative skills.

The data collected by Hamburg and Varenhorst (1972), and Varenhorst (1973), to support the Palo Alto project, was in the form of self-reports by the participants, anecdotal reports, and records kept on the number of "clients" seen by the peer counsellors. Although their evaluation methods were mainly subjective, the information presented indicates that the peer counselling programme was successful in the areas of academic, social and personal concerns. Another possible tribute to the success of the Palo Alto peer counselling programme is that it started in 1972, is still running, and is one of the few programmes in the district that has not been subject to budget cuts (Varenhorst, 1980).

The effects on counselees, after seeing peer counsellors, were evaluated by Buck (1977), and Schweisheimer and Walberg (1976). The results that Buck (1977) obtained, although not statistically significant, were positive. Looking at the pre- and post-written and anecdotal reports filled out by the teachers on the counselees, the author reported that after having seen the peer counsellors, the counselees' behaviors improved noticeably, especially in the areas of decreased aggressiveness and of finding more positive methods for problem/conflict resolution.

Schweisheimer and Walberg (1976), using a pretest-posttest control group design, identified and measured 16 different behavior variables in their subjects (counselees). They found no significant

differences in any of the variables after the peer counsellors had worked with the subjects.

The results from the two previous studies are questionable in that both failed to evaluate their training programmes, both did not evaluate the skill level of the peer counsellors, and both carried out the research in the developmental stages of the programme, and not when the programme was firmly established with experienced peer counsellors. Also in the two studies, but to a much greater degree in the research by Schweisheimer and Walberg, the newly-trained peer counsellors were put into a situation where the "clients" were identified as having low self-concepts, experiencing behavior problems, and being on the verge of dropping out of school. This would suggest a crisis orientation to their programmes, rather than a preventative one; that is, the preventative concept of peer counselling was applied theoretically, but in practice, a crisis orientation was applied--which may have negatively influenced the outcomes.

Rapp et al. (1978), noticing the "paucity" of reports on peer counselling programmes at the junior secondary school level, created and evaluated a programme which had several overall objectives. The two objectives of concern here were (1) to increase the trainees' self-concept; and (2) to improve the trainees' use of effective communication skills. Using a pre-posttest design, Rapp et al. found that the self-concept and discrimination testing differences were not statistically significant. Yet, subjective evaluations of the trainees by administrators, teachers, and parents were over-

whelmingly positive. However, they used no control group, and the discrimination testing of the students' communication skill ability consisted only of written answers to questions using such methods as multiple choice and fill in the blank; no verbal component was included.

The purpose of the study by Leibowitz and Rhoades (1974), was to assess whether high school students were capable of learning high levels of facilitative listening, responding, and problem-solving. Although they did not use a control group, their results, showing that the students were capable of differentiating high levels of empathic understanding after short-term training, were statistically significant. Further to the study by LeiSowitz and Rhoades, Andrede (1972), using a pre-posttest control group design, also showed through discrimination testing that it is feasible to train students.

Although the previous two studies lend support to the notion that secondary school students are capable of learning facilitative skills, knowing how to discriminate a facilitative and non-facilitative response, using either written or verbal responses, is not the same as actual face-to-face helping.

Gray and Tindall (1974), gave their control and experimental groups pre- and posttests in both discrimination and communication skills. They achieved significant results, in that the experimental group (trained students) was able to communicate more adequately on both paper and in groups than the control group. But here again, the effectiveness of the students' skills were not assessed in a

simulated or actual counselling situation.

Research by Crooker and Cherchia (1976), and Sussman (1973), produced positive results both in sophistication of research design and in the quality of results which support the notion that secondary students are capable of mastering communication skills. Using a pre-posttest control group design, Crooker and Cherchia (1976) set out to ascertain the effects of training versus non-training of "peer group leaders" in a high school setting. Their results revealed that there was a significant difference between groups, showing that high school students can be trained to function at effective and facilitative levels of communication. Sussman (1973), in developing and evaluating a peer-group counsellor training model, found significant differences between the trained students' ability (experimental) and the untrained students' ability (control) to function in a facilitative fashion.

Both research groups took the skill assessment of the student trainees one step further in that the researchers simulated actual counselling situations for the subjects, rated them, and achieved significant results to support the feasibility of peer counselling programmes for secondary schools. Unfortunately, Crooker and Cherchia (1976), left no reference, other than Carkhuff (1969), as to the training model and techniques they used to train students. The training model presented by Sussman (1973) is available, but it is not developed for use with senior secondary school students, does not follow a systematic format, and the major emphasis of the training is

on increasing awareness of self and of others rather than on skill development.

Objectives of the Present Study

The articles by Sussman(1973), Crooker and Cherchia (1976) and others, demonstrate one of the major problems with the present level of peer counselling research at the secondary school level. Generally, the research designs are weak, making the results questionable, and/or the methods used to train the students are vaguely referred to, unavailable, or do not follow a systematic format. Therefore, attempts at reproducing findings, or building on what previous researchers have already established, is at best difficult. As a result, the objectives of this research are to develop a systematic training programme, to assess the effectiveness of the training programme, and to look at some of the possible benefits of training for the peer counsellors.

The first priority of this research was to develop a systematic training programme with an emphasis on skill development; one which could be used for this and for subsequent research (Carr & Saunders, 1979). The primary objective of the training programme was to increase the facilitative skill of the students (trainees) as measured by accurate empathy. The training kit was not meant to be complete, comprehensive, or inflexible. By making the programme available to other researchers and counsellors, it is hoped that the kit will stimulate new discussion, new ideas, and improvements in

the development of training and evaluation methods for peer counselling students.

Empathic Listening Skill Assessment

Empathy, which is defined as the ability to understand the thoughts and feelings (world) of another person, was chosen as the primary criterion by which the impact of the training programme was measured.

The rationale for selecting the facilitative dimension of accurate empathy was as follows. Empathy is considered the basis for effective helping. As Carkhuff (1969) states: "Empathy is the key ingredient of helping. Its explicit communication, particularly during early phases of helping, is critical. Without an empathic understanding of the helpee's world and his difficulties as he sees them there is no basis for helping" (p. 173). A large body of evidence now supports the importance of empathy as the facilitative core dimension, along with respect and genuineness (Dickinson & Truax, 1966; Banks, Berenson & Carkhuff, 1967; Anderson, 1968; Foulds, 1969; etc.). Also, there is increasing evidence that empathy is a learnable skill (Carkhuff, Piaget & Pierce, 1968; Carkhuff, 1969; etc.); especially if the training is conducted in a systematic manner, combining didactic and experiential training methods, in an experientially-based programme.

Finally, Sussman (1973), in training and evaluating students on the dimensions of respect, genuineness and empathy, found that empathy improved the least. Sussman concluded that "being with or feeling with" another person was the most difficult process for young

people to master.

> Students began training at a higher level in both respect and genuineness than in empathy. This fact may be an indication that young people who want to learn to be helpers care about others and can be themselves more easily with their peers than they can be easily responsive to others. (p. 118)

As a result of the above findings, the trainees' ability to be effective helpers would seem to depend to a greater extent upon their ability to function empathically. Therefore, although other skills were included in the training programme (Carr & Saunders, 1979), the trainees' ability to function empathically was used as the primary tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the training programme.

For the purpose of this study, empathy was operationally defined in an identical manner to Carkhuff (1969). The level of demonstrated empathy is equivalent to the score obtained on the rating scale, *Empathic Understanding in Interpersonal Processes* (Carkhuff, 1969), that is, a "client" makes a statement such as: "I really like my job here and I like the people I work with, but I can't seem to please my boss. The harder I work, it seems, the more she expects me to do," and the counsellor makes a verbal reply. This reply is then assessed on the empathic criteria established by Carkhuff:

Level Five: "Underneath your frustration I can sense a great deal of anger. You're giving her 100 per cent and instead of appreciating that she expects even more. That's pretty hard to take."

Level Four: "Sounds like you really enjoy your job, yet because of

your boss's attitude things are getting pretty frustrating for you."

Level Three: "You like being here, but right now the situation is pretty discouraging for you."

Level Two: "I know how you feel. I've been working with that for a couple of years."

Level One: "The thing to do is to stand up to her. If you let her push you now, things will never be any better."

Self-Esteem Assessment

Studies which measure changes in the skill level of facilitative behavior, such as the present study, generally lend support to the hypothesis that people can change their behaviors in interpersonal skills, and as a result, that they do improve in growth-producing behaviors (Carkhuff, 1969). In an attempt to measure the growth-producing behaviors, much of the research in peer counselling, whether subjective or objective, has tested changes in the self-esteem (self-concept) of the peer counsellors as a result of their training experiences. Unfortunately, the results of the research so far have been questionable at best.

Even though the research to date is not very supportive of the idea that the self-esteem of the peer counsellors would increase as a result of communication skill training, authors such as Riesman (1965), Varenhorst (1973), Samuels and Samuels (1975), and Myrick and Erney (1978), still contend that behaviorally/emotionally, there are benefits for the peer counsellors. Their contention is

based on the belief that basic counselling skills, such as those covered in the peer counselling training, are basic interpersonal relationship-building skills. If the peer counsellors increase their ability to function interpersonally, then they are better equipped to deal with problems as they arise in the course of their lives. As a result, they feel competent, and feel better about themselves; thus their self-esteem grows.

This thesis also incorporates the belief that there are many benefits for the students as a result of being trained as peer counsellors. What those benefits are--skill development aside--does not appear to have been adequately documented. Therefore, as a secondary objective, another area examined will be self-esteem, and for the purpose of this study, self-esteem will be defined as a measure of one's self-liking or self-regard. The assessment will be carried out from two perspectives, and will involve the use of the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (SEI) (1967), plus the *Coopersmith Behavior Rating Form* (BRF) (1967).

Summary

The peer counselling literature at the secondary school level reveals a dearth of sound empirical research; yet at the same time, the lack of adequate investigation of peer counselling concepts has not prevented many schools and agencies from becoming involved in peer counselling programmes (Scott & Warner Jr., 1974; Myrick & Erney, 1978; Carr & Saunders, 1979).

Based upon the review of the literature, this investigation has incorporated certain assumptions, some of which are: (1) that peer counselling programmes have the potential of becoming an exciting and effective addition to traditional counselling programmes; (2) that peer counselling programmes, in order to improve and to gain greater acceptance, need further empirical support; (3) that minimal levels of facilitative conditions, as measured by accurate empathy, must be communicated by the peer counsellors before they see "clients"; (4) that secondary school students, if carefully and systematically trained as peer counsellors can reach at least a minimal level of accurate empathy; and (5) that there are benefits, behaviorally and emotionally, for students who participate in peer counsellor training.

Therefore, this thesis will test the following null hypotheses:

(1) There is no significant difference in levels of functioning on the facilitative skill of accurate empathy between volunteers who complete the training programme and those who are not trained as peer counsellors.

(2) There is no significant difference in levels of self-esteem, where self-assessed (SEI) or assessed by others (BRF), between volunteers who complete the training programme and those who are not trained as peer counsellors.

CHAPTER THREE

Subjects

The subjects for this study were students at a senior secondary school in the Greater Victoria area. They were volunteers drawn from the entire school population and ranged in ages from 15 to 17 years. The volunteers were sought through teacher, counsellor, and self-referral.

At a staff meeting, the school faculty was informed of the project and its purpose. A definition of, and a rationale for, peer counselling programmes were presented. It was explained to the staff that the purpose of the present research was to develop a training programme for students, the benefits to the school being inservice training for the counsellors, plus the provision of a group of trained students who would enable the school to start a peer counselling programme. The staff was given an information sheet concerning the project (Appendix 1), and their co-operation was sought. They were asked to talk about the project to their classes, approach students who they thought might make good peer counsellors, and collect and forward to the school counsellors names of students who indicated an interest.

For three consecutive days after the teachers had been presented with the information, announcements were issued in the school "Bulletin", which the teachers read out during the morning homeroom period. The

announcement asked for volunteers for a programme in which students would learn to help other students.

Approximately 60 students indicated an interest in the peer counselling project. An informational meeting was held in which a videotape of a peer counselling programme was shown. After this presentation, a discussion was held with the students. The project and the training programme were explained, the type of demands on their time was talked about, questions and concerns were dealt with. Of the 60 students, 20 volunteered to take part in the training. For those 20 students, permission to participate in the programme was sought and obtained from their parents or guardians (Appendix 2).

Two of the school counsellors also volunteered to be trained with the students, so they would be able to manage the programme and supervise the peer counsellors after the researcher had finished the project.

With the addition of the two school counsellors, there were 22 trainees; therefore, 8 students were randomly assigned to the control group.

The reasons for the uneven distribution of subjects were:

(a) with the two counsellors, there were 10 trainees in the first group (experimental);

(b) because of the training methods used, an even number of participants was required; and

(c) the trainer believed that for the initial training, 10 was a reasonable group size.

Design

The research, which was experimental in nature, used a Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, pp. 13-24).

The subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group. The experimental group, eight students, received the pretest, the experimental treatment (peer counsellor training), and the posttest. Both pretest and posttest consisted of a situational task and two assessment instruments. The control group, 12 students, received the pretest and the posttest, with no experimental treatment. The pre- and posttest situations were identical for both groups, and were administered at the same time. It is important to note that the researcher had no contact with the control group other than at the pre- and posttest meetings.

Although the pretest-posttest control group design did not control for the possible test sensitization of the subjects, it did, however, control for sources of invalidity such as: history, maturation, and regression. By randomizing subjects across the experimental and control conditions, both selection and mortality were controlled for (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, pp. 13-24). Therefore, given the field conditions, the small size of the sample (20 students), and the wish of the researcher to assess the degree of change, pre- and post-training, the pretest-posttest control group design was judged to be the most appropriate.

Instruments

For this research, three objective measures were used: the rating scale, *Empathic Understanding in Interpersonal Processes* (Carkhuff, 1969); the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (Coopersmith, 1967); and the *Coopersmith Behavior Rating Form* (Coopersmith, 1967).

Empathic Listening Skill Assessment

The ability to communicate the facilitative skill of accurate empathy during counselling was assessed in this study using the rating scale, *Empathic Understanding in Interpersonal Processes* by Carkhuff (1969). The scale is a revision of earlier versions of empathic scales (Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967;Truax & Carkhuff, 1967; Carkhuff, 1968). The previous and present versions of the scale were validated in extensive process and outcome research in counselling and psychotherapy (Carkhuff, 1968; Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967).

The range of this scale extends from a low point (level 1) where the counsellor demonstrates almost no understanding of the client, to a high point (level 5) where the counsellor shows consistently accurate responses to the client's full range of affect. At level 3, which constitutes the minimal level of facilitative interpersonal functioning, the counsellor must communicate an understanding of at least as much material as the helpee has communicated in the first place.

Most of the reliability data for the empathic rating scale was derived from Ebel interclass reliabilities for the pooled data used in analysis of the findings of many studies (Truax & Mitchell, 1971).

According to the studies summarized by Truax and Mitchell (1971), the empathy scale reliabilities ranged from .42 to .95.

Since the Carkhuff (1969) scale, which was derived from the Truax (1967) scale, has been used extensively in research, it was selected as the instrument to determine the peer counsellors' success as a result of training in the present study.

Self-Esteem Assessment

A secondary objective of this research is to begin to look at some of the possible personal benefits for the students as a result of being trained as peer counsellors. The area investigated is that of self-esteem, and for the purpose of this study, self-esteem will be defined as a measure of one's self-liking or self-regard. The assessment was carried out from two perspectives and involved the use of the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (SEI) (1967), plus the *Coopersmith Behavior Rating Form* (BRF) (1967).

Coopersmith (1967) presents extensive reliability and validity data to support the SEI and the BRF; yet at the same time, reviews by Wylie (1974) and Goodstein and Doller (1978) are critical of all the major instruments (including Coopersmith) reported in the literature for the measuring of self-esteem (concept). It is their contention that all the self-esteem instruments have such major theoretical and methodological limitations as to raise serious questions about their clinical use and potential research effectiveness. With that in mind, the Coopersmith scales were selected for use in the

present study because of their wide use and because they are "better" than most (Coopersmith, 1967; Wylie, 1974; Goodstein & Doller, 1978), at measuring self-esteem changes in children.

The *Self-Esteem Inventory* consists of 50 items, plus eight lie scale items, which are concerned with each trainee's perception in four areas: peers, parents, school, and self. The trainee checks one of the two columns, either "like me" or "unlike me", whichever best describes how he or she usually feels. An item checked in the "like me" column designates high self-esteem, while an item checked in the "unlike me" column designates low self-esteem.

The *Behavior Rating Form*, which was filled out by a teacher closely associated with each trainee, in this case each student's teacher advisor, is a 14 item, 5-point scale on behaviors presumed to be related to self-esteem. The ratings are based on how the person (teacher advisor) thinks the trainee feels about himself or herself, as evidenced by behaviors.

Procedure

Data Collection

Both the experimental and control groups of volunteers were asked to perform a pretraining situational task as follows: a 'coached client' who had a well-planned problem to present was 'counselled' by each subject in both the experimental and control groups. The 'clients' were counsellor aides (students) who worked in the school counselling

office. Each counsellor aide acted as a 'client' for three or four peer counsellor trainees. Each trainee was told that he/she had the opportunity to help another student with a personal problem as the first step in his/her training. The trainees were assured that the 'client' knew that he/she had no training, but the 'client' was willing to come and talk to the trainee for about ten or fifteen minutes. The trainees were instructed to "be as helpful as possible." Each experimental and control group members were informed that his/her 'counselling session' would be videotaped, and that he/she would be alone in the counselling room with the 'client.' They were also informed that if they wanted, they could look at their tapes after their training had been completed.

At the end of the series of training sessions, the members of the experimental and control groups were again asked to counsel 'clients' for about 10 to 15 minutes, and they were given the same instructions as in the pretraining situation.

The purpose of the taping for the present study was to assess the empathic skill level(s) of the students. In future programmes taping might also be used as a training tool and if needed, to gain support for a project by presenting visual evidence of the students' skill levels.

In a pretraining meeting, each subject in both the experimental and the control group, was asked to fill out a copy of the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (1967). This was done pre- and posttraining. Also, during the assessment period, pre- and posttraining, a copy of

the *Coopersmith Behavior Rating Form* (1967) was filled out by each trainee's homeroom teacher (teacher advisor).

At that meeting, and before the subjects were asked to fill out the SEI, they were told that the researcher was interested in evaluating the training programme and not them, individually. The inventories and the videotaping were methods of evaluating and improving the training programme. Therefore, no one other than the researcher would look at the tapes, and the results of the inventories would be kept confidential. To ensure that the inventory scores were kept confidential, the students were asked not to fill in their names, but instead to code their papers. The code consisted of the first initial of their mother's first name, the first initial of their father's name, and the day of birth (e.g. JJ15).

It was also explained to the subjects that because of the number of students who volunteered (20), two groups would be formed. The first group would be trained before Christmas, and the second one would be trained in the spring. The concept of random assignment was explained to the students and they were informed that the decision as to who was to be trained and when, would be made by that method.

The students were thanked, and told that they would be informed in a couple of days as to when they would start training.

The Training Programme

The training programme consisted of 12, two hour sessions, scheduled twice a week. Since the project was voluntary, the training was done

outside of school time; in this case, Mondays and Wednesdays after school.

The training programme was developed from activities that the authors created specifically for working with students and from activities suggested by other practitioners experienced in training for helping. The training sessions were systematically laid out, starting with some of the more basic skills or concepts; that is, each session dealt with a new skill or concept and would build upon information/skills/concepts covered in previous sessions.

For each training session there were three objectives. The main one was to increase the students' level of skill development, more specifically, empathic listening ability. The other objectives were to increase the students' awareness of self and of others, and to increase the students' conceptual knowledge of communication skills.

To achieve the objectives, experiential and dydactic components were included in each session, with the emphasis upon the experiential. The approach taken was that the bulk of the students' development would come through practice, through discussion, and through examination of what was said, done, and/or expressed during one of the practice exercises or role-plays. The greatest learning would take place as a result of experiencing and practising each skill and/or concept.

Although the primary objective of the training programme, and of this research, was the development of accurate empathy, other skills and information considered necessary for helping were also presented; non-verbal and verbal awareness; ineffective communication

styles; good listening skills; questioning; 'I' and 'you' messages; feedback (positive and negative); values; problem-solving and decision-making. These skills made up what the authors felt were the core skills and conceptual knowledge necessary for initial training in peer counselling (Carr & Saunders, 1979).

The Trainer

The trainer was a graduate student in Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria. She had extensive experience as both a counsellor of adults and of adolescents, and as a trainer of lay counsellors. She was highly skilled in the use of, and in the teaching of, the skills outlined in the training programme.

The trainer's task was two-fold: (1) to instruct the students using the methods outlined in the training proecure; and (2) to provide subjective feedback to the researcher as to the effectiveness of the training methods.

Preparation of the Counselling Tapes

To prepare the videotapes for rating the subjects' empathic skill level, the tapes were segmented using the middle four minutes of each pre- and posttraining tape for each experimental and control subject. The samples were approximately four minutes long because the interviews were 12 to 15 minutes in length each, and because studies (Truax & Mitchell, 1971), suggest that the middle third of a counselling session normally involves the least small talk and the most helping-

oriented conversations.

Each segment contained a minimum of 2 'client' statements and 2 'counsellor' responses. The segments were identified, put onto two master videotapes, arranged in random order containing the pretraining and the posttraining counselling interviews of subjects in the experimental (trained) and the control (untrained group). Then the master tapes were ready for rating.

Selection and Training of the Raters

The raters used in this study were three graduate students in Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria. The raters were trained in the use of, and in the teaching of empathic listening skills (Carkhuff, 1969, 1977; Peavy, 1977).

For this research, the training procedure consisted of an explanation of the empathic listening scale to be used (Carkhuff, 1969), and the rating process. Then a more detailed explanation of the scale was presented with cues to rating minimally facilitative responses (3.0) as a base and the additive and subtractive aspects of responses which would be rated higher or lower on the five-point scale. Then a videotape of several short counselling sessions (using students of the same age as the subjects) was played to the raters. They were asked to rate their responses verbally and any differences were discussed.

In the third step, another videotape was shown, and the raters were asked to make written responses independently of each other, then

asked to compare their ratings. During this time (before the ratings were discussed), interrater reliability was computed and when the interrater reliability consistently reached .60 or better, the criterion cited in previous studies (Truax & Mitchell, 1971), the raters were ready to rate the experimental tapes of the study.

The Rating Process

The master videotapes containing the pre- and posttraining counselling interviews of the subjects in the experimental and control groups were composed of four minute segments arranged in random order. The raters were not informed as to the nature of the research and did not know which segments were pretraining and which were posttraining, or which 'counsellors' were in the experimental or in the control groups. Also, the raters worked independently at all times and were instructed not to discuss their rating with each other.

The raters scored each 'counsellor' response in every segment, and an overall rating was obtained by deriving the modal level of functioning within each segment; that is, the level at which the 'counsellor' is functioning most frequently within the segment (Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967).

Since there were three raters, three modal scores for each segment were generated; therefore, an Ebel interclass correlation (Ebel, 1965, p. 328) was computed to determine the level of agreement on the raters' assessment of the tapes. The interrater reliability of pre- and posttest ratings was .93 and this falls well within the

range of reliabilities found in studies summarized by Truax and Mitchell (1971).

Method of Statistical Analysis

Analysis of covariance was selected as the method of analysis to test both null hypotheses. Since the subjects for this research were volunteers, they were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups, but, they were not randomly selected from the school population.

This technique allows the means to be adjusted thereby freeing the adjusted scores from the covariate (Kirk, 1968, p. 458), thus assuring initial equivalence of groups (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p. 24).

CHAPTER FOUR

This study was designed to analyze the effectiveness of a peer counsellor training programme, and to assess changes in the self-esteem of the peer counsellors. The investigation was structured to test two null hypotheses, and a .05 level of confidence was selected as the criterion of significance for the hypotheses.

Results are discussed in this chapter for each of the following null hypotheses:

(1) There is no significant difference in levels of functioning on the facilitative skill of accurate empathy between volunteers who complete the training programme and those who are not trained as peer counsellors.

(2) There is no significant difference in levels of self-esteem, whether self-assessed (SEI) or assessed by others (BRF), between volunteers who complete the training programme and those who are not trained as peer counsellors.

Hypothesis One. Hypothesis One was subjected to analysis of covariance on pre- and posttraining scores on the Carkhuff (1969) scale of empathy for the trained and non-trained groups. Results indicate that the trained group was significantly more facilitative than the non-trained group on the dependent variable when the pre-training score was the covariate (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1 shows the mean on both the pre- and posttraining variable (empathy) for trained and non-trained groups. The mean of the trained group was higher on the posttraining score while the non-trained group mean was comparatively unchanged. Table 1 also shows the adjusted mean on the dependent variable for the trained and non-trained groups. Since the difference between the means was significant ($p < .00001$), Hypothesis One was rejected (Table 2).

Hypothesis Two. Hypothesis Two was tested by analysis of covariance on the pre- and posttraining scores on both the SEI and the BRF for the trained and the non-trained groups (Table 4 and Table 6).

Table 3 and Table 5 give the mean scores and the adjusted means for the SEI and the BRF for the trained and non-trained groups. The data (unadjusted and adjusted means) indicate small mean differences to these variables; therefore, Hypothesis Two was not rejected.

Table 1

Means of the Trained and Non-Trained Groups on

Pre- and Posttraining Empathic Skills

Group	n	Pretest	Posttest	
		Unadjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Experimental Group	8	1.33	2.75	2.78
Control Group	12	1.44	1.69	1.67

Table 2

Analysis of the Covariance of the Postraining Scores on the Empathic Scale

Source	DF	MS	Adjusted F	P
Between	1	5.81	36.45	.00001
Within	17	0.159		
Total	18			

Table 3

Means of the Trained and Non-Trained Groups on Pre- and Posttraining Self-Esteem Inventory

Group	n	Pretest	Posttest	
		Unadjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Experimental Group	8	35.00	38.37	37.69
Control Group	12	33.75	34.25	34.71

Table 4

Analysis of Covariance of the Posttraining Scores on the Self-Esteem Inventory

Source	DF	MS	Adjusted F	P
Between	1	42.32	3.32	0.08598
Within	17	12.74		
Total	18			

Table 5

Means of the Trained and Non-Trained Groups on Pre- and Posttraining Behavior Rating Form

Group	n	Pretraining	Posttraining	
		Unadjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Experimental Group	8	35.63	33.75	34.06
Control Group	12	36.17	33.83	33.62

Table 6

Analysis of Covariance on the Posttraining Scores on the Behavior Rating Form

Source	DF	MS	Adjusted F	P
Between	1	.9441	.0635	0.80412
Within	17	14.87		
Total	18			

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter presents a discussion of the results as well as conclusions based on the results, and recommendations for future research. The conclusions offered attempt to answer the basic questions upon which the research was formulated. Recommendations for future research are based upon the findings of this study.

The following findings resulted from the statistical procedures employed using the .05 level of probability as the criterion of significance.

(1) Significant differences were observed on the means of the Carkhuff scale for empathy employed for the treated vs. the non-treated groups. The treated (experimental) group demonstrated a higher adjusted mean than the non-treated (control) group on the empathic scale when the pre-treatment scores were utilized as the covariate. The difference was significant at the $p < .00001$ level.

(2) Significant differences were not observed on the adjusted means of the SEI and the BRF scales of self-esteem employed for the treated vs. the non-treated groups. However, on the SEI, the adjusted mean score for the experimental was substantially higher than that of the control group to the extent that the difference was at the $p < .08$ level.

Discussion and Conclusions

As stated previously, the primary goal of this research was to create a peer counsellor training programme for use with secondary school students, one which followed a systematic format as suggested by Carkhuff (1969, 1972, 1977), and one which was effective, as measured by accurate empathy. With those goals in mind, the results indicate that the secondary school students who began the training programme, with no formal counselling skills and low interpersonal effectiveness, were able to demonstrate listening ability by use of interchangeable responses in a counselling situation to the extent that seven out of eight trainees reached levels of facilitative skills at or above minimal functioning.

It is important to remember that this study is only concerned with student volunteers; that is, students who are interested in learning peer counselling skills. With that in mind, the present study and others previously cited lend support to the contention that secondary school students are capable of learning the basic or core facilitative skills needed for helping. This finding has led the researcher to conclude that student volunteers can learn and improve their facilitative skills when exposed to a prescribed peer counsellor training programme (Carr & Saunders, 1979).

The implications or conclusions drawn from the results for the self-esteem assessment are not as straightforward as those for the facilitative skill development presented above. Although the dif-

ferences were not significant, the SEI did measure a fairly strong shift in the direction of a significant difference between the trained and non-trained groups.

There are several possible explanations for the lack of significant differences between the experimental and the control groups. The first is that learning interpersonal communication skills does not alter how a person feels about him- or herself. This explanation, however, does not account for the changes the SEI recorded.

A second and perhaps more plausible explanation is that generally the instruments that have been developed for self-esteem (concept) research (including the Coopersmith SEI and the BRF) frequently fail to meet the methodological expectations of good psychometric instruments (Goodstein & Doller, 1978; Wylie, 1974). There is fairly strong evidence that a more thorough development of self theory is required before adequate measures of self-esteem (concept) can be developed (Wylie, 1974; Goodstein & Doller, 1978). In other words, with self-esteem assessment, it is difficult, under the best of conditions, to measure self-esteem changes and get significance, yet reliable and valid results. Therefore, the Coopersmith SEI measured something, but it cannot be said with certainty that what it measured were changes in the self-esteem of the trainees.

A third explanation for the results is that the instruments may have detected changes in self-awareness rather than in self-esteem. Harris (1980) reported that while measuring self-esteem changes in a group of adolescents, she discovered that the changes she was trying

to measure, were in fact, changes in self-awareness. The discovery by Harris (1980), is considered here because the research was similar to the present study in that it dealt with adolescents, it was a short-term programme, and it focused on increasing self-esteem through self-awareness. More specifically, it is believed that changes in self-esteem may happen over a long period of time, whereas, changes in self-awareness can happen quite quickly. That is, over a short period of time (as with the present training programme) awareness of self can easily be increased but the self-esteem of the participants would increase or decrease significantly depending upon what tools or skills and support the programme gives the participants so that they can constructively deal with their new found self-awareness.

The above explanation may apply to the present research because along with skill development, the peer counsellor training programme was designed to increase the trainees' awareness of the types of facilitative and non-facilitative communication (Carr & Saunders, 1979). Since the training programme consisted of 20 to 24 hours of training over six to eight weeks, it was designed to provide the trainees' with the core skills necessary for helping. The programme's goals were: (1) to increase the trainees' awareness of how they communicate with themselves and with others; and (2) to provide them with the tools or skills to become more effective communicators/facilitators.

However, because of time limitations, the feeling of competency generally associated with increased feelings of self-worth would probably only change significantly when the peer counsellors obtained

practice in seeing and helping other students. Generally, this would occur after the initial training was completed, and after the post-self-esteem assessment was carried out.

Therefore, taking into consideration the questions surrounding the state of self-esteem assessment and the contention that the present research in trying to measure self-esteem changes may have missed a step, it seems very plausible that what the SEI detected may have been an increase in the self-awareness of the peer counsellors as a result of the training.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is the contention of this writer that training is the most important component of a peer counselling programme. Using a systematic training format, this study has shown that secondary school students are capable of learning the basic skills needed for helping. However, because of the small sample on which this study was undertaken further research might include participants from many peer counsellor training groups to increase the number of subjects and thus obtain more valid results. Also, in addition to teaching students to counsel, it may be well to investigate the feasibility of training students to assist with career development, to work with groups, to work not just in the school but in the community, and so forth.

Although the trained students did improve in facilitative skills, it would be important to look at the long-range effects of training. A follow-up study of trainees at varying lengths of time after

training might be attempted to observe whether or not facilitative skills are maintained, and to what level, after time has elapsed.

It must also be remembered that two of the school counsellors took part in the training. Although subjective observation by the trainer indicated that their presence had no significant effect upon the students it might be worth while to look at any possible effects by comparing training groups; for example, students only, adults only, students and adults, and/or control groups.

As a result of the findings of this research, other studies might look at changes in the level(s) of self-awareness of the trainees during and after training. Also, they might observe the effects over time on the levels of self-awareness and perhaps relate them to the possible effects on the self-esteem of the peer counsellors.

Since the SEI and the BRF produced no significant results with the self-esteem assessment, another instrument(s) or method(s) might be utilized to test the self-esteem of the trainees. Also, as with skill development, other studies might be conducted over time to investigate the long term changes, if any, in the self-esteem of the peer counsellors.

In the area of behavioral changes this study has focused on one specific aspect. Perhaps other questions to explore might be the influence of peer counselling and/or being counselled by peers on certain personality traits, attitudes, and/or values.

Another important area that has received little or no attention centres around the long term effects of a peer counselling programme on a school population. Keeping in mind that two very important

reasons for developing peer counselling programmes are, first, to improve communication among peers and between students and adults and secondly, to reduce various forms of abuse among students; further research might well explore these two effects of peer counselling. If there is a positive change in either communication, abuse, or both, peer counselling would have proven itself to be a very potent method of helping people to live more constructive, effective lives.

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APPENDIX I

Faculty Information Sheet

PEER COUNSELLING

Faculty Information Sheet

PURPOSE

Dr. Rey Carr and Mr. Greg Saunders, of the University of Victoria, will be working with the Counsellors at Esquimalt to train students to work in a helping way with other students. The 'Peer Counselling Programme' is being initiated in an effort to provide students with additional counselling resources, and to provide an outlet for ventilation of feelings.

SELECTION OF POTENTIAL PEER COUNSELLORS

The initial group of trainees will consist of students who volunteer or are recommended by faculty members. If you know of a student(s) you feel might be a possible candidate for the 'programme' would you either approach them and discuss the possibility of their participation, and/ or would you give the student's name to one of the Counsellors.

The students will be interviewed, informed as to what the programme is about, and what will be required of them: i.e. minimal levels of past academic performance, availability in terms of time, effort, and commitment will be discussed.

OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING

The objectives in training Peer Counsellors will consist of selected methods of teaching: (1) listening skills; (2) support skills; (3) clarification and feedback skills; (4) values clarification skills; (5) problem solving and decision making skills; (6) use of community resources; (7) referral procedures; and, (8) other skills as deemed necessary by the needs of the peer counsellor trainees.

Although it is not yet firmly established, training will likely take place outside school hours.

METHODS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES

Methods of training will consist of a number of experiential exercises, didactic presentations and discussions which will focus on the aforementioned skills.

GOALS

It is hoped that the programme will assist and complement the existing counselling services in several ways:

(1) It may offer increased availability of counselling services (at least on a para-professional level);

(2) It may provide an additional source for students desiring to talk about problems they think adults will not understand; and

(3) It may have a positive effect on classroom climate by providing a means for students to relieve feelings of frustration and anger rather than acting them out.

CONCLUSIONS

We would deeply appreciate the cooperation of the faculty in getting this project off the ground, and will welcome your support and your suggestions.

Mr. Greg Saunders
University of Victoria
477-6911 (Local 4422/leave message)

Dr. Rey Carr
University of Victoria
477-6911 (Local 6683)

APPENDIX II

Peer Counselling Project

PEER COUNSELLING PROJECT

We are starting a "Peer Counselling Project" at Esquimalt High School, where we will be working with the Counsellors to train students to work in a helping way with other students. Your son/daughter has volunteered to be trained as a 'peer counsellor'.

The main purpose of 'peer counselling' is to provide students with the opportunity to share their concerns with other students, their peers, who will be responsive and understanding. Some students need to talk with someone, but under certain circumstances, they feel that adults won't understand. Peer counsellors will be trained to be helping persons. They will also be taught to refer students to the appropriate adult(s) or agencies if they can't help.

The objectives in training the peer counsellors will consist of selected methods of teaching: (1) listening skills; (2) support skills; (3) clarification and feedback skills; (4) values clarification skills; (5) problem solving and decision making skills; (6) use of community resources; (7) referral procedures; and (8) other skills as deemed necessary by the peer counsellor trainees.

Since we are also interested in evaluating the effects of the programme, the trainees will be asked to fill out several questionnaires as part of the training procedure. However, filling out the questionnaires will be voluntary.

The training programme will begin the last week in October, and will end approximately eight weeks later.

If you wish, you can call one of the Counsellors (382-9226) to discuss these plans.

Mr. Greg Saunders
University of Victoria
477-6911 (Local 4422/leave message)

Dr. Rey Carr
University of Victoria
477-6911 (Local 6683)

I hereby give my daughter/son permission to participate in the 'Peer Counselling Training Programme' at Esquimalt High School. The content of the programme has been described to me by the above information.

_____
Signature of Parent or Guardian

_____
Date

_____
Name of Student

VITA

Surname: SAUNDERS Given Names: GREGORY ALAN KINGSLEY

Place of Birth: VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Date of Birth: JUNE 15, 1949

Educational Institutions Attended, With Dates of Entering and Leaving:

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, VICTORIA, B.C.	1969 to 1972
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, VICTORIA, B.C.	1974 to 1977
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, VICTORIA, B.C.	1977 to 1981

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded with Dates and Names of Institutions:

B.A. (Distinction)	1977	University of Victoria, B.C.

Honours and Awards:

University of Victoria Fellowship, 1977/78

University of Victoria Fellowship, 1978/79

University of Victoria Graduate Supplement, 1979/80

Publications:

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THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF A PEER COUNSELLOR TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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