

*A formative and
summative
evaluation of a peer
counselling
training programme
at a college of
education*

Jenny R. Keller

Acknowledgements :

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the following individuals, groups and organizations for their invaluable assistance in, and contributions to this research project :

my supervisor, Robin Farman,

students at the College - past, present and future,

United States Information Agency, Washington D.C. and the United States Information Service, Pretoria,

Staff of the Department of African Studies, School of Education and the Education Library at
Indiana University, Bloomington, In., USA,

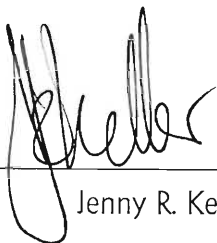
Library and Inter-Library Loans personnel at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg,

and the

CSD for financial assistance.

Declaration :

Unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, this dissertation represents
my own original work.



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Abstract

A formative and summative evaluation of a peer counselling training programme at a college of education.

The study investigates the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing a peer counselling support structure for students at an under-resourced college of education in a rural area.

Existing peer counselling training programmes were explored in order to identify appropriate principles for implementation at the particular college. The exploration focused on six dimensions : peer counsellor roles and functions, - selection, -training, - support and - supervision, ethical and cultural considerations and programme evaluations.

The investigation covered three phases : a survey and needs analysis, assessment of the appropriateness for, and impact of the training programme, on the 23 volunteers and an assessment of the service use and performance of these peer counsellors. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to evaluate all three phases. Qualitative analysis of the data indicated that students perceived peer counselling as a physically, socially and emotionally accessible support structure. Peer counsellors were seen to be a functional support alternative to the academic lecturers available for counselling, specifically in providing assistance with interpersonal dilemmas and in areas of mutual concern. Peer counsellor trainees assessed the training content and procedures as adequate, functional, applicable to the particular context and instrumental to certain personal developmental gains.

The data were used to inform the implementation and management of future peer counselling training programmes at the college and to indicate inconclusive areas for future research.

The study shows that peer counselling is a potentially effective, functional and complementary strategy to provide pastoral care at under-resourced institutions, provided that the peer counselling programme is customized for the contextual, challenges, needs and concerns of the particular institution.

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1. INTRODUCTION :

1.1 Transition to Tertiary Education - student experiences and needs :

Tertiary education optimizes the simultaneous developmental experiences of students in three areas : as people, as learners and in relation to a specific future position in the World of Work (Earwaker, 1992). The challenges and pressures of modern tertiary education may contribute to the negative developmental experiences of many students. Different living conditions, cultural diversity, competitiveness, anonymity, complex course and career choices, academic difficulties, disruptions in support networks and personal anxieties create stressful experiences, for which students may require specialized support and counselling services.

Students “have lives outside the lecture room” (Earwaker, 1992, p. 127). In addition to the adjustments associated with student life, they often experience domestic and interpersonal difficulties, mismanage interests, sacrifice personal and financial resources, have parental responsibilities and cope with major crisis like injuries, illness, bereavement and crime.

These experiences may impact negatively on their development and success as learners.

Tertiary education is increasingly servicing student populations from disadvantaged backgrounds. These, often more mature students, experience difficulties in their transition to institutions of multi-cultural diversity and independent learning (Majozi, 1994). They often lack the academic foundations and skills expected by tertiary education. The stresses of meeting academic standards may be exacerbated by their inability to meet the financial implications of tertiary education.

It is therefore imperative for institutions of higher learning to provide support structures which will assist students in academic and life skills development. These structures will ultimately facilitate an uncomplicated transition to tertiary student life, promote student retention and academic success.

1.2 Tertiary Student Counselling Services :

1.2.1 Universities and Technikons :

Student counselling centers at universities and technikons provide a spectrum of specialized services to their student communities. These services assist students with their transitional needs, psycho-social challenges and preparation for adult roles in a dynamic society and challenging labour market. Services offered include individual counselling and therapy, group work shops in life skills and academic literacy. Student counselling centers usually employ full-time professional psychologists and psychology interns. Post graduate psychology students on masters level or students in the helping professions assist the professional counsellors as peer counsellors and peer counsellor trainers (Scheepers, 1997).

Peer counselling is an effective, practical and economical bridging structure that extends and diversifies the range of services offered by the student counselling centers (Scheepers, 1997). Peer counselling empowers students to deal with the psycho-social challenges of tertiary student life on a more primary level.

1.2.2 Under-resourced Institutions :

Vocational colleges are not generally endowed with the resources to mount student counselling centers or to employ the full-time services of psychologists. The limited counselling services at these institutions are offered voluntarily by lecturers who have some additional, informal training in helping skills.

At colleges of education the student counselling service may be an additional function of the School Guidance or Education department. Students are mainly assisted with academic development, personal coping and problem solving skills. Necessary referrals are made to other support and welfare agencies, when appropriate and if these agencies are accessible to the student community.

In the absence of professional student counselling services, colleges of education are expected to develop their own customized, syntonetic and innovative counselling structures with the capacity to effectively address the psycho-social needs of their student communities. Peer counselling could be considered as a more accessible and immediate support alternative to supplement the counselling role of lecturers at these under-resourced institutions. Feasible and appropriate implementation will, however, require cognisance of the institution's contextual challenges and the characteristics of the particular student community.

1.3 Peer Counselling - servicing needs :

1.3.1 Conceptual understanding :

Peer support often occurs naturally, unscheduled and spontaneously. It is the common, and frequently helpful, practice of sharing daily concerns and challenges with a friend or a confidante. Peer counselling is an extension of this natural practice and an increasingly preferred mode of support in a variety of contexts (Topping, 1996).

Peer counselling implies a particular supportive and helping relationship between peers : people with the same age, status, life experiences, and knowledge. Peer counsellors have been selected, trained and supervised in a variety of helping skills and helping roles (Foster-Harrison, 1995).

These roles may vary from facilitator, helper, mentor, mediator, assistant, group leader to special friend (Myrick, 1993). The roles and procedures may vary, but the underlying idea is the same.

The peer counsellor attends to the peer's interests and needs and applies the acquired interpersonal, communication and caring skills to encourage the peer to explore and develop viable problem-solving and coping skills for resolving day to day concerns and challenging situations (Myrick, Highland & Sabella, 1995). Counselling, in terms of the therapeutic definition, is not part of the peer counsellor's role.

Peer counsellors develop their helping skills through specifically designed training programmes. The content, format and delivery of these training programmes will reflect a particular counselling theory, acknowledge the experiences of the trainees and the essential features of the context in which the peer counselling relationships will manifest.

From the above account, it appears that peer counselling has the potential to provide appropriate and functional support where professional helping services are inadequate. The following sections explore why peer counselling is acknowledged as an appropriate form of support and in which contexts it has been applied with positive outcomes.

1.3.2 Appropriateness :

The American School Counsellor Association concluded that the justification for peer counselling is based on observations that students communicate better with peers than non-peers, for example a teacher or a professional counsellor (Locke & Zimmerman, 1987). According to Dolan (1995), youth prefer to talk to someone of their own age about their interpersonal problems. Research further shows that students primarily rely on their peer relationships as sources of information, guidance and support in personal problem-solving (Scheepers, 1997).

Peer support is experienced as more acceptable than, and as effective as, professional help. The efficacy and acceptability of the peer counselling relationship can be attributed to the following :

- (a) the perceived similarities in life experiences, ethnicity, attitudes, values, age and context related concerns, help the user to feel understood and respected (Giddan, 1988),
- (b) the approach is more informal, accessible, socially and culturally sensitive and thus less intimidating and
- (c) the user is encouraged to accept responsibility and to develop personalized self-help strategies (Scheepers, 1997).

Although benefits for both the peer helper and the user have been reported, (Myrick, 1993), Lewis and Lewis (1996) found the literature on peer helper programmes to be rather uncritical with respect to the overall effectiveness and potential negative effects of such programmes. Negative effects may occur if peer counsellors apply their skills in areas for which they have been inadequately trained or are beyond their capabilities (Lewis & Lewis, 1996).

The quality of training and clear role descriptions are thus important factors determining the effectiveness of a peer counselling programme. Sharp (1996) states that continuous training and support meetings will improve and entrench the appropriate peer counselling and problem management skills. Myrick et al. (1995) mention that almost all students can acquire basic helping skills through special training and supervision.

As peer counsellors can expand on a natural and spontaneous practice, it just makes good sense to train students in basic helping skills to effectively reach out to their peers to facilitate self-help and problem management.

1.3.3 Applications :

Peer counselling is a popular, preferred and effective support structure in a variety of contexts : educational, business, medical, occupational, religion, crisis intervention and in special interest areas (D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Topping, 1996; Scheepers, 1997).

Recent successful applications outside the formal educational context are :

- (a) peer support for senior citizens (Burke & Hayes, 1986),
- (b) home-based prenatal peer counselling (Lapierre, Perreault & Goulet, 1995),
- (c) Peer counselling for people testing HIV antibody positive (Baiss, 1989),
- (d) HIV/AIDS peer counselling in childrens' homes (Du Toit & Winfield, 1994),
- (e) promotion of mental health for police (Greenstone, Dunn & Leviton, 1995).

Peer counselling programmes have been employed successfully in American and Canadian schools for more than twenty years (Robinson, Morrow, Kigin & Lindeman, 1991). These programmes have benefitted both users and peer counsellors (Robinson et al., 1991). Peer counsellors can extend the support networks and facilitate a caring school environment, provided they receive appropriate training, support and supervision (Sharp, 1996). School- based peer counselling programmes have played a positive role in child suicide prevention (Herring, 1990), anti-bullying strategies (Sharp, 1996), conflict mediation (Thompson, 1996) and setting up support groups that help students in various areas of social and personal development (Corn & Moore, 1992).

Trained student peer counsellors are valuable and pro-active resources to meet the demands of mental health care on campus. Campus peer counselling programmes have been effective in improving the teaching-learning environment (Heppner & Johnston, 1994), acquaintance rape prevention (Berkowitz, 1994), support with issues of physical intimacy and relationships

(Nassar & Collins-Eaglin, 1994) and substance abuse information and support (Yaccarino, 1995). Other functional campus peer counsellor helping roles include career counselling, academic support, crisis management and assisting peers with campus adjustment and personal skills development (Kehayan, 1992).

Effective peer counselling programmes are also found on some South African university and technikon campuses (Rainer, 1989; Majozi, 1994; Scheepers, 1997; Smit & Botha, 1997).

1.4 Peer Counselling at a college of education - can it service the student needs ?

The emerging picture of peer counselling is that of an intuitive, cost-effective, functional and multi-utility support structure. The research project is based at a residential college of education, to explore the appropriateness, feasibility and applicability of a peer counselling support structure within this particular educational setting.

1.4.1 Setting :

Situated in rural Kwa Zulu, the residential College of Education is one of three tertiary institutions in the region. The infrastructure of a medium sized town, with the expected social, economic, medical and governmental structures, serve the college community. Significant agricultural, mining and tourism industries sustain the region. The 700 full-time residential students are all relatively homogeneous with respect to their cultural, socio-economic and disadvantaged educational background.

The students qualify with a three year teaching diploma for the secondary education phase and compete for the limited teaching positions available at the surrounding disadvantaged high schools.

1.4.2 Counselling practices, deficits, issues and concerns :

An evident need for pastoral care and a primary self-help support structure, with the capacity to promote student well-being and academic success, exists at the College of Education. A counselling

team, consisting of three academic lecturing staff members, is in operation. As the only available structure, it is inadequate to effectively deal with the diverse academic and psycho-social counselling needs of the student community. Key factors that contribute to the counselling team's ineffectiveness are limited availability, expertise, socio-cultural dissimilarities and an inadequate referral base.

It is thus desirable to establish a more accessible, primary level counselling structure that would be relevant to the students' needs, expectations and assistance-seeking behaviour.

A peer counselling structure will benefit students who prefer to consult a peer, rather than a lecturer, especially if cultural and language dissimilarities may debilitate the counsellor-student relationship (Locke & Zimmerman, 1987).

An exploratory discussion with the second and third year Guidance students at the College elicited the following perceptions on the acceptability and feasibility of a peer counselling structure :

- (a) peer counsellors are more accessible and user-friendly due to contextual and social similarities,
- (b) peer counsellors will play a preventative role as primary level counsellors and referral agents,
- (c) peer counsellors will make a positive difference to the learning environment, once established as trusted, responsible and skilled helpers.

These perceptions echo the findings of Gougeon (1989) and Scheepers (1997).

1.4.3 Motivation for the study :

The research project is an exploration of the applicability, feasibility and acceptability of peer counselling, to supplement the existing, limited counselling capacity within the institutional setting. The aim is to establish guidelines for the implementation, development and management of a customized and syntonetic peer support structure for the College of Education.

The contextual characteristics, priorities and issues are recurrent in many under-resourced educational institutions, nationally and in other developing countries. The findings of this research project may be of relevance to these institutions for the implementation and development of a peer support structure, with the capacity to address the psycho-social needs of their students.

1.4.4 Domain of the study :

The research project investigates the following three areas of concern with respect to the implementation, development and management of a peer counselling structure :

- (a) the selection of suitable peer counsellors,
- (b) appropriate training, support and supervision of the peer counsellors,
- (c) the role and function of peer counsellors in promoting student well-being.

The introductory peer counselling training programme created a forum through which an awareness of peer counselling was stimulated and the student counselling needs, preferences and training requirements were determined.

An action research approach was adopted in the exploration and evaluation of the introductory peer counselling training programme. Action research is a participatory and reflective small scale enquiry of a contextualized event, with the purpose to understand, evaluate and improve that event (Carson, 1990). The approach facilitates ongoing research cycles and data feedback loops for the continued evaluation and reform of the peer counselling programme.

Qualitative data accumulated in three, interactive research phases are applied to generate appropriate guidelines for the implementation, development and management of a syntonetic peer counselling support structure. The research phases commenced in the second term and concluded in the fourth term of the academic year at the College.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW :

The literature review provides an overview of the nature of counselling services rendered at tertiary institutions and the incorporation of peer counselling within these professional services.

Peer counsellor training is informed by theory. Four counselling theories and a variety of existing peer-counselling training programmes are explored to establish the principles and priorities for peer-counselling practice at the particular College of Education. The principles and priorities are established along the six peer-counselling programme dimensions : peer counsellor roles and functions, peer counsellor selection, peer counsellor training, ethical and cultural considerations, peer counsellor support and supervision and programme evaluations.

2.1 Tertiary Student Counselling Services :

Centralized student counselling centers, at most South African universities and technikons, provide holistic counselling programmes for the students in the areas of academic, career and psycho-social development (Watson, Van Lingen, & De Jager, 1997). These counselling programmes provide support to individual students in the management of their specific psycho-social, academic and adaptive dilemmas, as well as pro-active assistance in areas of general student interests and concerns.

Centralized service provisions take the form of one-to-one consultations, by appointment, referral or walk-in, and group sessions in life skills development pertaining to a specific area of mutual concern.

The service providers are psychologists, psychology students at masters level and psychology interns, employed by the institution as professional counsellors and group leaders. A faculty-based student counselling service, funded by the private sector, is an example of a decentralized service model (Barnsley, 1997). The faculty psychologist renders a contextualized support, monitoring, mediation, individual and group counselling service to the students attached to the faculty.

Scheepers (1997) states that a peer counselling support structure is a practical, pro-active, cost-effective and empowering strategy to expand and supplement the range of services offered by the student counselling center. The student counselling centers at universities and technikons are often inadequately resourced, in terms of the cost and availability of professional helpers, to effectively address the diverse and increasing counselling needs of the student community.

Peer counselling, within the tertiary student community, refers to the support and assistance provided by the trained peer counsellor, a student, to another student. The peer counsellor applies acquired listening-, communication-, interpersonal- and helping skills to facilitate personal development, exploration of alternatives and decision-making for the fellow student, seeking assistance (Scheepers, 1997). Counselling, in the therapeutic sense, is not implied and little, if any, direct advice is given.

A peer counselling programme entails the training and supervision of selected students in core counselling skills and further training in specialized areas, to provide a range of helping services.

Giddan and Austin (1982) mention a number of helping roles in which campus peer counsellors have functioned effectively : new student orientation, support networks in residences, academic advising, career guidance, crisis counselling, special interest self-help groups and as bridging or referral agents to professional counselling services.

The appropriateness and effectiveness of student peer counselling programmes is grounded in the following researched observations :

(a) students rely primarily on their peers as sources of information, support and guidance in problem management (Giddan, 1988; Scheepers, 1997),

(b) the above tendency and support potential has been developed into formalized and functional support structures as the core counselling skills, such as listening, communication, facilitation, attending and showing empathy are teachable and learnable (D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Kehayan, 1992; Myrick, 1993; Cowie & Sharp, 1996),

(c) the mutual concerns, shared life experiences and contexts of student life reduces social distance and promotes understanding, key aspects in the helping relationship (Giddan, 1988),

(d) the peer support approach to problem management is more informal, accepting, accessible, socially and culturally sensitive and thus less intimidating (Giddan, 1988; Scheepers, 1997).

Campus peer counselling programmes at universities and technikons do not replace or substitute the professional student counselling services, but rather supplement and expand on the available support base to functionally meet the needs and challenges in the different areas of campus pastoral care (ibid).

2.2 Counselling Theories :

Professional and lay counselling practice is informed by theory. The helper practices his skills within a framework, or theory, containing assumptions about human nature, the helping relationship and how intervention and change are effected through the qualities and climate of the particular helping relationship (Gazda, Childers & Brooks, 1987). According to Gazda et al. (1987) the six major, and widely utilized, theoretical approaches to counselling and therapy are those of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, Adlerian counselling and psychotherapy, the person-centered approach, behaviour therapy, rational-emotive therapy and reality therapy.

The next four theories : Adlerian counselling, Rational-emotive therapy, Reality therapy and Person-centered counselling, have been selected for discussion because of their potential to inform counselling practice within a context where :

- (a) lay counsellors with limited training in psychology assist peers,
- (b) tertiary education students are assisted through primary, informal and spontaneous support structures,
- (c) the counsellee experiences problems in coping with, or resolving a short term adaptive concern or mildly stressful experience,
- (d) the peer assistance is in the form of a basic, quality interpersonal and communicative process, enabling the counsellee to develop life- and self-help skills.

The theories are summarized here in terms of the presupposed nature of change effected by the counselling relationship, the nature of the helping relationship, helper qualities and the appropriateness of the theory to inform lay counselling practice. Adlerian counselling, Rational-emotive therapy and Reality therapy are indicated to be less relevant to the peer-counselling context, than the Person-centered approach.

2.2.1 Adlerian counselling :

Alfred Adler (1927/1969) perceived human nature to be socially based. The counselling relationship is an educative process to assist the counsellee to correct certain erroneous thinking patterns, established during childhood (Gazda et al., 1987). These cognitive distortions are really feelings of inferiority and social disinterest originating from the individual's specific family constellation and atmosphere (Gazda et al., 1987).

The counselling relationship, the range of therapeutic techniques and the counsellor's expression of warmth, openness, friendliness and non-judgmental attitude, help the counsellee to recognize mistakes in his or her thinking and to restore social interest.

2.2.2 Rational-Emotive therapy :

In this approach developed by Ellis (1979), the counselling relationship promotes change in dysfunctional behaviour that is the result of irrational thought patterns and beliefs about the self and behaviour (Gazda et al., 1987). These irrational thought patterns and beliefs are challenged by the counsellor through logical reasoning and discussion with the counsellee.

Behaviour, thinking and feeling are components of an interactive triad. Changes in the underlying beliefs and thought patterns effect changes in the dysfunctional behaviour and emotions (Gillis, 1994). Irrational thought patterns and beliefs are based on social and cultural expectations that have been internalized as absolute and definite standards (Gillis, 1994). Negative emotions develop and are sustained when these standards are not met.

The counsellor assists the counsellee to develop greater control over his or her emotions and behaviour through logical thought patterns and reasonable and appropriate beliefs. The irrational thought patterns and beliefs are pointed out to the counsellee, explored and disputed until the irrationalities are understood and replaced.

2.2.3 Reality therapy :

According to Glasser (1965), as mentioned in Gazda et al. (1987), the counselling relationship encourages the counsellee to accept responsibility for behaviour so that a "success identity" can

gradually replace the counsellee's "failure identity". A failure identity is the non-responsive meaning the individual attaches to his unique identity (Gazda et al., 1987). Although life experiences have an effect, it is the denial of moral and personal responsibility that establishes the failure identity (Gazda, 1987).

The counsellor is warm, friendly, accepting, but firm, in challenging the counsellee to evaluate the level of goal attainment of the current dysfunctional behaviour. Alternative response patterns are jointly planned and followed through until success is experienced and personal responsibility accepted (Gazda et al., 1987).

2.2.4 Person-centered counselling :

Peer counselling is a brief and informal counselling encounter between peers, or individuals sharing similar concerns, life experiences and status. The basis of the support rendered is that of active and empathic listening (Cowie & Sharp, 1996). The sophisticated therapeutic techniques implied by Adlerian counselling, Rational-Emotive and Reality therapies, are not fully compatible with the peer counselling context. This statement is made in view of the short term stressful experiences and concerns dealt with in peer counselling and the training needs of lay peer counsellors.

A more appropriate and flexible theoretical framework to consider for informing peer counselling, is that of the person-centered approach. In this approach, developed by Rogers (1951), emotional problems are seen to be the result of an inconsistency between the self-concept, self-regard and the actual life experiences of the individual (Gillis, 1994). According to Rogers, the self-concept has internalized the values and opinions, or conditional regard, of the individual's significant others (Gillis, 1994). These conditions of worth contradict, rather than reinforce, the individual's life experiences and debilitate the natural tendency to actualize potential (Gazda et al., 1987).

The counsellor creates an appropriate, empathic, accepting, non-prescriptive and emotionally-safe environment, in which the individual is free to explore his real self and feelings and can apply his inherent growth capacity to effectively deal with the problematic concern (Gillis, 1987).

The environment is established through the helper's display and communication of the following human qualities : warmth, support, sincerity, openness, genuineness, unconditional acceptance and accurate understanding (Gillis, 1994). The helper skills include active listening, paraphrasing, reflecting content and feeling, appropriate limited self-disclosure, non-judgmental attitudes and congruent verbal and non-verbal responses.

The person-centered counselling approach lends itself to the training of lay counsellors, functioning within a peer support context. The appropriateness of this approach is situated in the fact that it is the counsellor's personal attitudes and communication skills, rather than sophisticated therapeutic skills, that facilitate the counsellee's personal growth and problem management. These attitudes and skills are teachable and learnable and thus applicable to a peer counselling training context, where the participants have had limited formal training in psychology.

A number of peer counselling training programmes employ specific training models for the training of lay counsellors in basic, or micro-counselling skills. The training models of Ivey (1974), Carkhuff, (1969 & 1980) and Egan (1975) strongly reflect the counsellor skills, indicated by the person-centered approach as necessary and sufficient therapeutic conditions for change.

2.3 Peer Counselling Training Programmes :

This section explores the ways in which some of the South African and overseas peer counselling training programmes dealt with six programme dimensions, indicated in the literature as important considerations for the planning and implementation of a peer counselling support structure (D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Kehayan, 1992; Myrick, 1993). These dimensions are peer counsellor roles and functions, peer counsellor selection, peer counsellor training, ethical and cultural issues, peer counsellor support and supervision and programme evaluations.

The peer counselling training programmes reviewed in this discussion are examples from a range of social contexts, in which the implementation of a peer support structure has been evaluated as being appropriate, effective and functional.

2.3.1 Peer Counsellor roles and functions :

Peer-counselling training programmes are geared toward preparing the participants for specific helping roles and functions. A key description of the role and function of a peer counsellor is that of "providing assistance" (Downe, Altmann & Neysetvold, 1986; Myrick, 1993; Myrich et al., 1995). Peer counsellors do not undertake to provide professional therapy; rather they apply their helping skills to assist peers with the clarification of thoughts and feelings and the exploration of the available options in resolving day-to-day concerns, challenges and problem management within a specific context. The support rendered to the peer group is focused on alleviating stressful experiences, which occur due to context specific factors and concerns and life skills development, relevant to coping with the contextual challenges. This restricted role of active listener and facilitator of a safe environment in which the troubled peer can explore his own solutions to his specific dilemmas, is intended to serve as a safe guard against problematic ethical issues (Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

The roles and functions of peer counsellors within specific occupational or social contexts are more narrowly defined as in the case of peer counsellors within an educational context. Two examples of this context specific support are that of an elderly peer counselling project (Burke & Hayes, 1986) and a police departmental peer counselling programme (Greenstone, et al., 1995).

Elderly peer counsellors working in a recurrence prevention programme for elderly victims of crime and violence, alerted the elderly to ways of protecting themselves and provided assistance and support to the elderly victims (Burke & Hayes, 1986).

Police peer counsellors are specifically trained in crisis intervention and crisis management skills to render immediate, accessible and temporary emotional first aid in stressful experiences related to trauma, personal and professional crisis (Greenstone et al, 1995). Other support projects include buddy programmes, stress management, orientation of spouses and counselling individuals who are retrenched and involved in disciplinary processes. The peer also counsellors also function as bridging agents to the other departmental mental health services available.

Letsebe (1988) indicated the following roles and functions for peer counsellors active in township youth clubs :

(a) listening and reaching out to youth club members, assisting members with adjustment, tutoring and role modeling,

(b) recruiting new club members, organizing programmes for youth clubs, serving on club committees, volunteer work in organizations,

(c) referring members with problems beyond their scope of functions to appropriate community resources.

The peer counsellors are expected to limit their functions to youth clubs and only engage in the helping roles for which they have been trained (Letsebe, 1988).

School peer counsellors function as role models, referral agents, academic tutors, student orientation aids, special friends to at-risk and handicapped students, manage a counselling room or drop-in center for self-referrals and teacher referrals, assistants in the counselling office, group facilitators and participate in community projects (McIntyre, Thomas & Borgen, 1982; Blain & Brusko, 1985; Downe et al., 1986; Garner, Martin & Martin, 1989; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991). Peer assistance group facilitators work with groups as leaders or co-leaders in special areas of concern and problematic experiences, for example conflict management, academic problems, substance abuse, sexuality, peer pressure, stress management and building self-esteem (Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990). The facilitators identify these areas of concern and plan theme weeks, workshops and presentations to provide information and support to peers and the opportunity for life skills development (McIntyre et al., 1982; Garner et al., 1989; Diver-Stamnes, 1991).

Peer counsellors also render specific services to community projects. These functions include working in a health clinic, infant care center, making lunches for the homeless and raising funds for meals for the elderly (Diver-Stamnes, 1991). Other organizational functions falling within the scope of peer counselling include managing the type and extent of the publicity strategies services rendered by the peer counsellors, planning helping activities and outreach programmes, group building, publishing a newsletter, designing a peer counselling logo, administration forms and activity posters, planning peer counsellor group building outings and activities, recruiting and supporting new peer counsellors, designing and conducting training activities and workshops (McIntyre et al., 1982; Kehayan, 1992; Du Toit & Winfield, 1994).

A survey by Salovey and D'Andrea (1984) of campus peer counselling activities showed that the most common peer counsellor roles relate to academic problem-solving, academic tutoring and

counselling in the residence halls. The problems dealt with are mainly academic difficulties, problematic relationships, career anxieties, depression and stress. Campus peer counsellors are also involved in special areas of support and counselling, for example career guidance, crisis intervention, new student orientation, sexuality and health issues, substance and sexual abuse and support group facilitation.

2.3.2 Peer Counsellor selection procedures :

Peer counselling rests on the assumption that peers provide a natural, informal and accessible form of support in, and assistance with experiences and issues of mutual concern. Students that are already providing assistance to their peers and are regarded as “natural helpers” may be considered as the target group for peer counselling training. Individuals that display the characteristics and attitudes indicative of a helping personality, are usually considered for peer counselling training programmes. These suitable characteristics and attitudes include the following :

- (a) a desire and potential to help peers, caring behaviour, warmth, altruistic, sensitive, empathic, friendly, sociable, maintain relationships, trusted, liked and respected by others, respect for confidentiality,
- (b) sound interpersonal, communication, listening and attending skills, confidence and leadership qualities, problem-solving and conflict handling abilities, capable of analyzing situations,
- (c) genuineness, strong sense of personal identity, express feelings and opinions openly, mature, responsible, reliable, flexible, open to experiences and developing self-awareness,
- (d) interests and extra-curricular activities, exemplary behaviour, absence of academic, substance abuse and emotional problems which may interfere with performance as peer counsellor,
- (e) commitment to training, acquisition and application of helping skills, supervision and peer counselling roles and functions (Blain & Brusko, 1985; Garner et al., 1989; Tindall & Salmon-White,

1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991; Kehayan, 1992; Myrick, 1993; Du Toit & Winfield, 1994; Greenstone et al., 1995).

Various procedures and strategies have been applied to identify and select the individuals that display the above suitable helping characteristics and attitudes for peer-counselling training. Written volunteer applications, recommendations and nominations by peers, current peer counsellors, teaching- and counselling staff are common first phase screening strategies (Samuels & Samuels, 1975; Carr, 1981; Blain & Brusko, 1985; Bowman, 1986; Giddan, 1988; Letsebe, 1988; Garner et al., 1989; Herring, 1990; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Kehayan, 1992).

The nominators and programme organizers use checklists and rating scales of helping behaviour, attitudes and characteristics to guide their recommendations. This is usually followed by screening interviews with individuals and small groups, role plays and short writing exercises.

During the interviews and role plays, the nominees are observed for their display of helpful characteristics, helpful and unhelpful responses. The writing exercises explore their interests and motivations for wanting to participate in the peer counselling activities.

Sociograms and standardized instruments, for example measuring interpersonal functioning, empathy, communication skills and self-concept, are also used to determine the suitability of the volunteers for the peer counselling programme (Letsebe, 1984; Downe et al., 1986; Kehayan, 1992 & Dolan, 1995).

Letsebe (1988) mentions a fair understanding of English as an additional selection criterion, as English was the medium of instruction of the training programme and the participants' second language. Demographic needs of the potential users of the peer counselling support structure should also be considered in the selection processes (Greenstone et al., 1995).

Final selection of those who will undertake peer counselling duties may be made after completion of the peer counselling training programme. Peer counsellors may be selected on the grounds of trainer and trainee evaluations of their attendance, participation and performance during the training programme (Giddan, 1988; Kehayan, 1992). These final selection procedures may also allocate individual peer counsellors to specific helping roles and diverse functions.

The selection of suitable peer counsellors is an important factor determining the overall success of the peer counselling programme (Downe et al., 1986). Kehayan (1992, p. 15), is of the opinion that the success or failure of the peer counselling, depends on the "quality" of the participants, selected for training and to undertake the peer-counselling roles and functions. Bowman (1986) however, states that there is little evidence to show that selection procedures necessarily result in the selection of more effective peer counsellors.

A selection of smaller groups, ranging from six to fifteen peer counsellor trainees, is indicated in the literature as more manageable, dynamic, interactive and compatible with a variety of training activities (France & Gallagher, 1984; Bowman, 1986; Letsebe, 1988; Garner et al., 1989; Gougeon 1989; De Rosenroll & Dey, 1990; Du Toit & Winfield, 1994). Smaller groups allow for quality training and appropriate supervision (Carr, 1981; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990). It is important for the group size to be divisible by two and three for participants to practice the skills in role plays and simulations (Carr & Saunders, 1980, Letsebe, 1988). Pairs may interchange roles of helper and helpee, and in the case of groups of three, as observer. Larger groups, eighteen to twenty four trainees, may require a longer training period to ensure that all the individuals have the opportunity to practice their skills under supervision (Myrick, 1993). Alternatively the large group can be subdivided and trained in smaller groups during different time slots (Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990).

2.3.3 Peer Counsellor training - content and procedures :

Peer-counselling training programmes vary in duration, approach and content, according to the maturity of the trainees, the goals of the programme and the peer-counselling roles and functions that the training intends to prepare the participants for. This section is an overview of the duration, content and training methods of various peer counselling training programmes, noted in the literature.

The overall time allocated for peer-counselling training and the duration of each training session, varies widely in the programmes reported in the literature. Training sessions are between forty five minutes to three hours each, and the total training time varies between twelve to sixty hours (Bowman & Myrick, 1980; Carr & Saunders, 1980; McIntyre et al., 1982; D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; France & Gallagher, 1984; Letsebe, 1984; Bowman, 1986; Burke & Hayes, 1986; Garner et al., 1989; De Rosenroll & Dey, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991; Corn & Moore, 1992; Myrick, 1993; Du Toit & Winfield, 1994; Greenstone et al., 1995; Myrick et al., 1995). Training sessions occur at monthly and weekly intervals, and/or over an intensive one, two to three full day period.

Myrick (1993) states that ten to twelve hours is the minimum time required for a peer counselling training programme, but Morrill, Leach, Radebaugh, Shreeve, Colby and Johnson (1987) are of the opinion that at least thirty hours of training is required. In the survey of Salovey and D'Andrea (1985) on campus peer counselling programmes, only 36 % of peer counsellors received substantial training, that of being longer than ten hours.

Training programmes are usually designed to address user needs and to prepare the trainees for specific peer counselling roles and functions (Kehayan, 1992; Myrick et al., 1995). The programme should be tailored to fit the setting and the unique contextual dilemmas in which the peer

counselling structure will manifest (Morrill et al., 1987).

Training programmes may be divided in parts (D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Phillips & Sturkie, 1993). The first part (ten to twelve sessions) covers basic helping and communication skills and the second part (up to ten advanced training sessions) applies the skills to specific areas of contextual concerns, social problems, interests and projects.

Some peer-counselling programmes are entirely based on the training models of Carkhuff(1969, 1980), Ivey (1974), Egan (1975) and the Peer Counselling Starter Kit by Carr & Saunders (1980).

The following skills and topics are covered by most peer counselling training programmes :

- (a) the nature of helping, helping responses and processes, qualities of the helping relationship, facilitative conditions for change, categories of helping, establishing a non-threatening environment, starting and ending a helping relationship, scope and context of peer counselling,
- (b) self-awareness, genuineness, values, understanding self and others,
- (c) verbal and non-verbal communication and attending skills : active listening, responding to feelings, clarifying ideas, questioning, probing, reflecting, paraphrasing, summarizing, exploring feelings and ideas, empathy, warmth, acceptance, respect and minimal encouragers, factors debilitating effective communication, providing feedback and self-disclosures,
- (d) ethical issues: confidentiality, trust, referral procedures, professional guidelines, cross-cultural awareness, autonomy of the helpee,
- (e) decision-making, goal setting and a problem solving model,
- (f) community resources,
- (g) planning of peer counsellor activities, further training and
- (h) a supervised practicum

(Bowman & Myrick, 1980; Carr & Saunders, 1980; McIntyre et al., 1982; D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Letsebe, 1984; Blain & Brusko, 1985; Salovey & D'Andrea, 1985; Burke & Hayes, 1986; Downe et al., 1986; Garner et al., 1989; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Phillips & Strurkie, 1991; Kehayan, 1992; Myrick, 1993; Majozi, 1994; Scheepers, 1996; Smit & Botha, 1996; Topping, 1996).

Special issues and topics covered in advanced training for peer counsellors are :

- (a) crisis management, intervention, counselling and suicide prevention,
- (b) depression, issues of loss and death, terminal illnesses,
- (c) substance abuse,
- (d) conflict management,
- (e) sexuality, physical intimacy, birth control, HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment, abuse and child abuse,
- (f) family interactions and relationships,
- (g) life skills : assertiveness, stress management, building self-esteem and study skills,
- (h) new student orientation,
- (i) developing and managing drop-in counselling centers and utilising community resources

(D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Blain & Brusko, 1985; Gougeon, 1989; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Myrick, 1993; Phillips and Sturkie, 1993; Du Toit & Winfield, 1994; Nassar & Collins-Eaglin, 1994; Greenstone et al., 1995).

A good peer counselling programme is based on experiential learning principles and includes role play exercises, group discussions, didactical presentations, step wise development of skills, integration of skills and video-recorded training (D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983).

All the peer counselling programmes explored for this section, apply experiential, trainee-centered and participatory training techniques and activities.

These techniques and activities include :

(a) ice breakers, social games, group building exercises, relaxation and imagery exercises, role plays, simulations, fish bowls, case studies - written and audio-visual, group work, brain storming, problem solving exercises, group discussions,

(b) work sheets, written assignments, hand-outs, a workbook or a file with related material, exercises and space for personal record-keeping,

(c) audio- and video-tape recorded demonstrations of skills, counselling interactions and the trainees' performance and counselling experiences

(Carr & Saunders, 1980; Bowman & Myrick, 1980; Letsebe, 1984; Burke & Hayes, 1986; Gougeon, 1989; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991; Kehayan, 1992; Majozi, 1994).

The role plays are in dyads or triads with the group members alternating the roles of helper or counsellor, helpee and observer (McIntyre et al., 1982; Burke & Hayes, 1986; Majozi, 1994). Alternating roles facilitate the development of counsellor sensitivity, understanding of the helping relationship, discussions, reflection and self-assessment. Topics of the role plays and simulations are realistic and build on the trainees' actual experiences (Garner et al., 1989).

The experiential and trainee-centered techniques and activities facilitate and encourage trainee participation, reflection, discussion, self-assessment and subsequently learning and skills acquisition (Carr, 1981; Gougeon, 1989).

Training sessions consist of the following phases : revision, overview of objectives, warm-up, a lecturette, demonstration or modeling, skills practice and application, discussion and debriefing, summary of proceedings (Carr & Saunders, 1980; McIntyre et al., 1982; Letsebe, 1984; Blain & Brusko, 1985; De Rosenroll & Dey, 1990; Majozi, 1994).

Guest speakers from the helping professions and community resource organisations may also address the trainees on special and ethical issues, or field trips may be organized to resource centers (Gougeon, 1989). Lay and professional counsellors, helping professionals or other suitably qualified persons from community organizations may also be engaged as peer counsellor consultants, supervisors and resource persons (Letsebe, 1984).

Trainees are usually required to document their reflections, field experiences and skills applications, assignments and research projects, interviews with lay and professional helpers, peer issues and concerns and how peer counselling can address these, in a journal, diary or workbook (Letsebe, 1984; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Phillips & Sturkie, 1993). All written work complements the training sessions, in order to facilitate reflection, revision and the total learning experience (McIntyre et al., 1982; Phillips & Sturkie 1991).

At completion of most training courses, the trainees complete individual supervised practicum sessions during which troubled peers are assisted with respect to a specific problematic experience or concern (Carr & Saunders, 1980; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991). Presentations of field work, or a simulation, with appropriate interventions and resolutions may also be presented by peer counsellor groups for critique, assessment and feedback by the trainer, supervisors and programme consultants (Letsebe, 1984).

2.3.4 Ethical and cultural considerations :

Downe et al. (1986) recommend that peer counsellors are exposed during training to the ethical issues related to their support roles and the dilemmas relating to the maintenance of confidentiality. All the peer counselling programmes surveyed for this discussion included at least one training session on cross-cultural sensitivity, the importance of confidentiality and the development of, and compliance with an ethical code of conduct.

Giddan (1988) states that although adult peer counsellors are not professionals, they still need to collaboratively develop their own codes of responsibility, standards and ethical guidelines, relevant to their limited support activities and roles. Giddan (1988) also asserts that careful recruitment, selection, training and supervision may prevent the ethical problems which arise from peer counsellor lack of accountability and responsibility, incorrect advisement and breach of confidentiality.

A peer-counselling ethical code of conduct should include guidelines relating to :

- (a) the individual's rights to privacy, dignity, respect, regard, acceptance, honesty, freedom of choice, autonomy and self-development,
- (b) the maintenance of confidentiality relating to the information disclosed during peer counselling activities,
- (c) the display of responsibility, accountability, personal integrity, positive attitudes and a healthy life style by the peer counsellor,
- (d) cultural sensitivity and the cross-cultural implications of language, communication, attending and helping skills of the peer counsellor, awareness of the effects of values, judgements, moral conflicts and the cultural context of the peer's problematic experience,
- (e) the need for continuous supervision and support,

(f) a clear articulation of the situations, issues, areas of concern and conditions in which peer counselling will be functional and appropriate,

(g) identification of issues and situations beyond peer counselling competence, guidelines for appropriate responses to these situations, consultations with supervisors, professional helpers, community resources and the appropriate guidelines for referrals (Giddan, 1988; Letsebe, 1988; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

The training programme should include information and skills regarding the following topics to facilitate the development of, and compliance with appropriate ethical standards :

- (a) human rights, competing rights and conflicts that may arise in the counselling relationship,
- (b) ethical norms, standards and principles that guide helping professionals,
- (c) case studies, role plays and simulations that promote the development of ethical sensitivity and guidelines for functional problem management in specific problem situations (Giddan, 1988).

In the peer counselling training programme for pre-adolescents (Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990), a contract, pledging personal confidentiality is signed by the participants. The maintenance of confidentiality applies to the self-disclosures during the training sessions, the recordings in the participant workbook and the peer counsellors' system of record keeping. The trainer is expected to model exemplary personal and professional behaviour to contribute to the participants' development of caring, responsible and appropriate behaviour.

Problems relating to ethical and cultural factors are limited through the training of contextually appropriate and applicable skills. The role-plays and simulations are reality-orientated and reflect the kind of situations and problem areas in which the peer counsellors are expected to apply their skills.

Problems where referrals are required, and the appropriate referral procedure to be followed, should be clarified and explained. Peer counsellors should understand that these problem areas are beyond their scope of training. Supervision and support meetings are important opportunities for dealing with peer counsellor experiences, ethical and cultural concerns and problems beyond their scope of training.

Cowie and Sharp (1996), state that problems arise if the boundaries of the peer counselling relationship are unclear. Explicit boundaries need to be stipulated with regard to the nature of the peer counsellor role, the type of issues that peer counsellors are competent to deal with, the purpose of the peer counselling service and the limitations of the peer counsellor role and peer counselling relationship. Supervision and support meetings are also indicated as valuable opportunities for the peer counsellors to explore problematic counselling roles, share concerns and to develop appropriate responses when dealing with ethical dilemmas or problems that fall outside the scope of training and competencies.

2.3.5 Peer Counsellor supervision and support structures :

Support and supervision structures are essential for the maintenance, development, quality and success of the peer counselling service (Carr, 1981; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

Support and supervision may be provided by the trainer, suitably qualified and appointed resource persons, helping professionals and the peer counsellors themselves (McIntyre et al., 1982; Letsebe, 1984; Kehayan, 1992).

These structures have the following essential functions :

(a) it creates regular opportunities for the peer counsellors to ventilate their experiences, explore

concerns and problematic areas of their roles, reflect on case work, their responses and skills, consult with appointed resource persons, to support one another and to promote positive group feelings,

- (b) exploration and regulation of ethical issues, referral procedures, observation of limitations and boundaries of the peer counselling roles and functions, monitoring of user progress,
- (c) the transfer of information, additional and continuous training and skills development, problem solving and strategy discussions,
- (d) assistance with counselling assignments and planning of peer counselling activities and events,
- (e) assessment, review and feedback by the organizers, supervisory and resource persons on the impact of the peer counselling programme, peer counsellor performance and programme activities and developments (McIntyre et al., 1982; Blain & Brusko, 1985; Giddan, 1988; Letsebe, 1988; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991; Robinson et al., 1991; Kehayan 1992; Greenstone et al., 1995; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

Supervision and support may be provided through a variety of mechanisms and strategies :

- (a) direct supervision : the supervisor is present as a silent observer or co-counsellor during the counselling session,
- (b) tape-recorded counselling sessions for review and discussion,
- (c) scheduled regular weekly meetings and special monthly training sessions on specific issues, and life skills,
- (d) the assistance of outside agencies, community resources and helping professionals may be co-opted to provide work shops, seminars and training sessions,
- (e) a resource file containing notes, service delivery guidelines, referral procedures and a list of community resources,
- (f) organized visits to appropriate helping agencies and helping services, for example health clinics,

community counselling and crisis centers (Bowman & Myrick, 1980; McIntyre et al., 1982; Letsebe, 1984; De Rosenroll & Dey, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Phillips & Sturkie, 1993; Greenstone et al., 1995; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

2.3.6 Programme evaluation strategies :

Evaluation is important for effective and functional programme planning, implementation, development and modification. Evaluation procedures create the required feedback loops for accomplishing the appropriate improvements in training, management and in the extent and quality of peer counselling service delivery. This reflective process ensures that the programme goals and the service user needs and concerns are met. "Evaluating peer counselling is also important as a way of validating that it works" (Altmann, Nysetvold & Downe, 1986, p. 87). The evaluation procedures should include both formative and summative evaluation strategies (Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990).

Programme evaluations occur in three areas : assessment of the peer counsellor, the peer counselling processes and the outcomes of peer counselling (Altmann et al., 1986). The evaluation strategies that have been used in each of these three areas by peer counselling programme developers will be explored next.

Strategies applied in assessing the peer counsellors' baseline competencies, personal growth and level of learning, retention, skills acquisition and demonstration are :

- (a) personality inventories, self-appraisal inventories, informal trainer and peer ratings of participation and performance with observation checklists,
- (b) pre- and post- training assessment of personal development, self-concept, communication skills, interpersonal functioning, helpful responses and empathy levels, for example Carkhuff's Empathy

Rating Scale and Scales of Measurement (Carkhuff, 1969), The Ivey Attentive Behaviour Scales (Ivey, 1974),

(c) pre- and post-training audio tape and video recorded interviews with a trained role player, video recordings of role plays and simulated activities, role play with trainer,

(d) pre- and post-training written responses to case studies, written tests and exercises in work book, a daily journal recording experiences, reflections, concerns and assignments,

(Bowman & Myrick, 1980; McIntyre et al., 1982; France & Gallagher, 1984; Letsebe, 1984; Altmann et al., 1986; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Henriksen, 1991; Robinson et al., 1991; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

Peer counselling processes can be assessed through :

(a) helping skills observation checklists,

(b) audio tape and video recordings of peer counselling interactions (Altmann et al., 1986; D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983).

Peer-counselling outcomes assessment establishes whether the training is functional, appropriate and effective, the support structure is helpful or detrimental, how and by whom the peer counselling structure is used and the overall impact, effectiveness and goal attainment of peer counselling.

McIntyre et al. (1982) advises that outcomes are best evaluated by instruments designed specifically for the particular programme and context.

Some popular outcomes assessment strategies are :

(a) user standardized and non-standardized open-ended questionnaires, Likert-type scales and inventories, for example The Peer Counsellors Effectiveness Inventory for Individuals (McIntyre et al.,

1982),

(b) surveys of experiences with, and opinions and perceptions of peer counsellor activities and performance,

(c) verbal, standardized and non-standardized feedback from training sessions, for example open-ended questionnaires and Likert-type scales,

(d) a logbook indicating of type and frequency of problems dealt with by the peer counsellors,

(e) control and experimental group comparison of changes effected by the training programme, specifically differences in helping responses and between trained and untrained groups,

(f) questionnaires assessing attitudinal changes and personal gains from participation in the peer counselling programme (McIntyre et al., 1982; Letsebe, 1984; Burke & Hayes, 1986; Altmann et al., 1986; Frisz & Lane, 1987; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Henriksen, 1991; Du Toit & Winfield, 1994; Nassar & Collins-Eaglin, 1994; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

2.4 The capacity for peer counselling at the College of Education :

The contextual features and existing student counselling practices of the College, were described in sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.2. An obvious need for pastoral care in the form of a primary peer support structure exists at the College. The counselling staff team, three academic lecturers, is inadequate to functionally address the wide range of counselling needs of the 700 residential, teacher-training students.

The range of areas in which the students have previously required assistance and support include academic, life skills and career development, personal and family relationships, health concerns, personal and social trauma and crisis. Academic development, relationship issues, spiritual guidance and stress management are the main areas in which staff support students, with the other areas largely unattended to, or left to the existing informal peer support relationships.

Some students are also uncomfortable to seek assistance and support from academic staff with respect to their personal concerns and problems, especially if language and cultural dissimilarities exist between counsellor and student. The limited availability of the counselling staff to render support when and where required, is another factor contributing to the inadequacy of the counselling staff team.

In the absence of staff availability and expertise, adequate financial and community resources, this study attempts to explore the feasibility of peer counselling, as a strategy to provide pastoral care and promote student self-empowerment and well-being. The rationale for considering a peer support structure is based on the finding that students are more likely to seek assistance from a peer, rather than from a professional counsellor, whom they find to be physically and emotionally less accessible (Carr, 1981).

The potential at this college for a peer counselling support structure exists and can be developed for the following reasons :

- (a) spontaneous and informal helping structures already exist and are being utilized,
- (b) students can learn peer-facilitative skills and are thus capable of supporting their peers with resolving day-to-day mutual concerns and stressful experiences in a self-empowering and responsible way (Phillips & Sturkie, 1991; Myrick, 1993),
- (c) a peer counselling training programme will develop and improve the natural helping abilities of identified students and formalize the existing helping activities and structures (de Rosenroll & Dey, 1990).

Functional design and implementation of an appropriate peer counselling training programme at the College requires cognisance of the unique contextual factors, such as the full, and often disrupted, academic year, extra-mural activities, student perceptions, needs, abilities and training requirements, the cultural aspects of seeking and providing peer support and the lack of financial and training

resources. The next section elaborates on the ways in which the peer-counselling programme dimensions, indicated in the literature as important considerations for the planning and implementation of a peer counselling support structure, were interpreted to accommodate the contextual features of the College.

2.5 Principles and priorities for a peer counselling training programme at the College of Education :

After consideration of the different ways in which the documented training programmes dealt with the important peer counselling programme dimensions (section 2.3), priorities and principles for peer-counselling implementation and management at the College, were established in terms of the peer counsellor roles and functions, peer counsellor selection, peer counsellor training, ethical and cultural considerations, peer counsellor support and supervision and programme evaluations .

2.5.1 Peer Counsellor roles and functions :

Peer counsellors would be trained to provide a defined, structured and formalized primary support alternative to their troubled peers. Their roles and functions could be described as follows :

- (a) information agents,
- (b) referral agents to the secondary counselling level, that is the counselling staff team and appropriate community resources,
- (c) to reach out, listen to and provide support to peers with day-to-day concerns, contextual challenges and stressful experiences,
- (d) the peer counsellor is expected to give little advice, but rather to facilitate a non-threatening and caring environment in which ideas and feelings can be expressed and clarified, alternatives can be explored and the troubled peer can be empowered to make responsible decisions and manage their

problems functionally and appropriately,

(e) to identify and diffuse experiences that may develop in a crisis situation and to manage a crisis situation when it occurs,

(f) to provide input and shape the design, management and implementation of the peer counselling programme.

Further specific roles and functions that are to be identified through the research processes.

2.5.2 Peer Counsellor selection procedures :

No explicit selection procedures were decided upon, as this was the inception of the peer counselling concept at the College and an area to be investigated is that of the students' perspectives on appropriate selection procedures. Volunteers were recruited through an advertising campaign, in the hope that at least 12 students, already identified by their peers as "natural helpers", will show interest in the advertised peer-counselling training programme. A group of 12 trainees (four students from each of the three year groups) would be manageable for the planned training venue and activities.

2.5.3 Peer Counsellor training - content and procedures :

An application of an existing peer counselling programme, may be inappropriate for the unique contextual features and challenges of this College of Education. It was rather decided that the students' needs, opinions and direct input should guide the development and implementation of a more syntonetic peer-counselling training programme and support structure.

An initial training programme (Appendix 2) of fifteen hours, arranged as five three-hour sessions, was planned. The second and third year Guidance students indicated that this would be manageable

within the hectic academic programme. The students also indicated a preference for consecutive sessions, rather than sessions scattered over several weeks. The content would focus on the basic Rogerian (person-centered) facilitative skills. These skills are not only learnable and teachable within the specific training context, but would also be likely to be of value in the interpersonal development of the trainees and their day-to-day interpersonal interactions.

The initial training programme (Appendix 2) also included an introduction to the nature of the peer counselling relationship, the counsellor as a person and individual, ethical and cultural issues, verbal and non-verbal communication and attending skills, a problem management model (Appendix 8), specific relevant peer counselling applications, referrals and community resources. The evaluation strategies and research procedures would indicate if follow-up, continuous and specialized training would be required and what the content and format of this should be.

It was decided to separate verbal and non-verbal skills into more manageable components, entrench these skills in simple role plays, followed by the integration of these skills in more elaborate role plays.

The problem management model (Appendix 8) of Nelson-Jones (1993) would be used, as the application of this five-step model is simple, understandable, applicable to a variety of problem situations and appropriate for the peer counselling context. The order of the five steps are easily remembered with the acronym "DASIE". The letters represent the following :

- (1) Develop the counselling relationship, identify and clarify the peer problem,
- (2) Assess and redefine the problem in terms of life and self-help skills,
- (3) State manageable goals and plan intervention strategies,
- (4) Intervention processes and
- (5) End the relationship and consolidate the life and self-helping skills (Nelson-Jones, 1993).

Each training session would have the following format : a revision and goal setting introduction, a lecturette, demonstration, skills practice, discussion, debriefing and a session overview. Trainees will compile their own notes from the flip charts compiled for each session and the resources mentioned on their library reading list (Appendix 9). Theory will be kept to the absolute minimum, with maximum time rather being allocated to skills practice and reflection.

A supportive, encouraging, self-evaluative and culturally sensitive learning climate, with maximum trainee participation, would be established. The trainer will display cultural sensitivity in the interpretation and application of the counselling skills. Open discussions on the cultural interpretations of, for example help-seeking behaviour, eye-contact, advice-giving, self-disclosures and reflecting feelings, will be encouraged. As peer counselling will obviously occur mainly in the mother-tongue of the students, the trainees' English vocabulary of feeling words will be extended and compared with the Zulu expressions.

Training strategies that maximize participation and utilize the trainees' knowledge of students' helping behaviour, social interactions, concerns and problematic experiences, would be used.

These strategies are social games, simulations, role plays and fish bowl exercises (Scannell & Newstrom, 1991; Rooth, 1995). Role plays will be in dyads or triads, with the roles of helper, helpee and observer circulating. This will assist trainees to develop their understanding of the counselling relationship, helpee perspective and to encourage discussions and feedback on the application of the counselling skills.

Topics for role plays will be extracted from the trainees context : real life issues and experiences to prepare them for their peer counselling roles and to develop an appropriate repertoire of responses and problem management skills.

A fish bowl exercise is a form of role play. Two trainees role play a particular experience whilst the rest of the training group is seated in a circle, enclosing the role players. This group observes the role play and indicate their scores and comments on an observers' checklist (Appendix 7). Group discussions follow the role play, guided by the responses on the observers' checklist.

2.5.4 Ethical and cultural considerations :

Awareness of ethical standards and the adoption of an appropriate code of conduct were to be encouraged in the following ways :

- (a) brain storming and discussions on professional guidelines, standards and Human Rights,
- (b) discussions and role plays on contextual issues that may confront the peer counsellor that are beyond their scope of training and that would require referrals, appropriate responses to these situations and the required referral procedures,
- (c) a clear outline of the boundaries of the peer-counselling relationship, roles and functions,
- (d) anonymity of record keeping with regard to the field work assignment (Appendix 10),
- (e) the pledging of confidentiality with a contract (Appendix 4 (c)) and a collaborative exercise on compiling their own training code of conduct (Appendix 4 (a)).

The compilation of a formal peer-counselling code of conduct is an item for future support meetings.

The trainer is required to display cultural awareness and sensitivity through encouraging discussions on the cultural implications of the counselling skills. This is necessary as the cultural context and language medium of the training is different from the language and cultural context in which the peer counsellors will practice their skills. As the student community is largely mono-cultural, cross-cultural counselling skills and issues are, at this early stage of the peer counselling programme, not a priority.

2.5.5 Peer Counsellor supervision and support structures :

The expertise of helping professionals, additional staff members or appropriately qualified community resource persons are not available to provide assistance in the individual support and supervision of the peer counsellors. The limited support structures consist of consultations with, and referrals to the counselling staff team and networking with the community health, welfare and career centres.

Bi-weekly support meetings would provide opportunities for ventilating concerns, discussing peer counselling experiences, consultation, support, work shops and skills development.

In addition to the observation, assessment and remediation of skills practice during the training sessions, the field work assignment (Appendix 10) was planned as an additional strategy to monitor the peer counsellors' skills applications.

2.5.6 Programme evaluation strategies and research procedures :

As the programme evaluation and research procedures are planned to occur simultaneously , it was decided to adopt the implementation protocol of France and Gallagher (1984) and De Rosenroll and Dey (1990). Evaluation strategies and research procedures would thus cover three phases : a pre-training, training and post-training phase.

The pre-training phase includes the introduction of the peer counselling concept, recruitment of potential peer counsellors and a survey (Appendix 1) to ascertain the needs, help-seeking behaviour and the expectations of the potential users of a peer counselling structure. Evaluation during the training phase would focus on the assessment of the appropriateness and functionality of the training programme, with regard to approach, content and strategies (Appendix 6 (a) & (b)) and the impact of the training programme on the peer counsellor trainees (Appendix 5 (a) & (b)).

Post-training evaluation and research strategies would assess the peer counselling activities and service use through support meeting discussions and the peer counsellors' field work assignment (Appendix 10).

Action research principles would be reflected in the research procedures. Action research is an organic and reflective process, implemented to assess, modify and reassess a social practice within a particular social context, with cognisance of the contextual features and involvement of all the participants in that particular practice (Carson, 1990). The participants collaboratively undertake a small-scale, self-reflective enquiry to understand, evaluate and improve the particular social practice. Action research is a suitable approach for this particular study, as it is a research priority to maximize student involvement in the continuous assessment and modification of the peer-counselling training programme and the peer support structure within the particular college context.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES :

This section describes the research setting, research objectives, research schedule and the constraints of the research project. The research schedule consists of three phases : the pre-training, training and post-training phases. The research procedures carried out in each phase, and data of immediate relevance to the research procedures, are reported.

3.1 Research setting :

The College of Education offers a secondary teacher's diploma in the sciences, commerce, technology, languages and humanities. The medium of instruction is English, but Zulu dominates on the social level. The academic staff are predominately Zulu mother-tongue speakers, with 20 % of the staff representing other language groupings.

Guidance is one of six elective ancillary subjects. The department of Guidance and Counselling co-ordinates the student counselling and welfare services provided by the counselling staff team, boarding staff, residence committees and a portfolio member on the student representative council. The three academic lecturers on the counselling staff team, are referred to as "student counsellors".

A wide range of extra-mural activities are available to the students of which the sporting, music and religious activities are the most popular. Students are also keen to initiate and organize their own interest group activities, for example in drama, dancing cultural and environmental affairs.

The student community (700) is relatively homogeneous, but noticeably diverse with regard to entry age. This can be attributed to socio-economic conditions that require many students to either remain at home or seek temporary employment after matric to accumulate the necessary financial support

to further their studies.

Students are presently united in two major areas of concern : that of continued financial support to complete their studies and the uncertainties related to the precarious teacher job market.

These concerns are often the underlying incitement for the academic disturbances and mass actions that occur from time to time.

3.2 Research objectives :

The following concerns were raised in a preliminary discussion on peer counselling with the second and third year Guidance students :

- (a) Who would be regarded as suitable peer counsellors ?
- (b) How would potential peer counsellors be selected ?
- (c) What essential skills and qualities should peer counsellors have ?
- (d) What kind of training is required ?
- (e) What additional support and training should be available to peer counsellors ?
- (f) What would the role and function of the peer counsellors be ?
- (g) How would peer counsellors network with the secondary counselling level ?
- (h) How would confidentiality guidelines be maintained ?
- (i) What kind of supervision would be required ?

These concerns were structured and incorporated in the research questionnaires to be used in each of the research phases. The main objective of the research project can be described as follows :
to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of peer counselling within the College context and
to establish guidelines for the implementation, development and management of a peer-counselling

support structure. These guidelines are to be established in terms of the critical peer-counselling programme dimensions, discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.5 : peer counsellor roles and functions, selection, training, support and supervision, ethical and cultural considerations and programme evaluations.

3.3 Research design :

An action research protocol was adopted to facilitate collaborative information gathering in, and information feedback to, the three interactive pre-training, training and post-training research phases. Three action research principles are reflected in the research design :

- (a) contextuality : the data collection procedures are context specific and applied to develop guidelines for a context specific peer counselling structure,
- (b) participatory : students were involved as trainees, researchers and eventually implementers of the peer counselling structure,
- (c) reflective : the data collected formed research feedback loops to evaluate, modify and customize the peer counselling structure (Carson, 1990).

Each of the three interactive data collection phases investigates particular dimensions of the proposed peer-counselling programme. Non-standardized, self-developed questionnaires were used in the three phases to obtain the qualitative data. As in the nature of action research, findings are reported as the research phases unfold, in order to inform the refinement of the research procedures.

Svensson 's (1986) method of content analysis was be applied to code the qualitative data.

The coding method will be outlined in chapter four, where the bulk of the qualitative data is reported in terms of the six critical peer-counselling programme dimensions.

3.4 Research schedule :

The schedule for the research procedures had to be planned in accordance with the academic, social and teaching practice programmes of the students. Phases one and two were scheduled for the less disruptive second term, phase one approximately two weeks prior to the start of the peer counselling training programme.

In the first phase, each second year Guidance student conducted a structured interview (Appendix 1) with three other students, one from each year group. No specific guidelines were indicated to the Guidance students for their selection of respondents. The interview respondents thus formed a convenience or nonrandom sample. The survey explored the counselling needs, counsellor preferences, help-seeking behaviour and the students' perceptions of peer counsellors and peer counsellor training.

The introductory peer counsellor training programme was the focus of phase two. Each of the five training sessions was concluded with an evaluation questionnaire (Appendix 6 (a) & 6 (b)).

The trainees' responses to selected questions shaped the changes to the content and procedures of the following training sessions. The volunteer peer counsellor trainees completed pre- and post-training profiles (Appendix 5 (a) & 5 (b)).

The training programme consisted of four consecutive two-hourly evening sessions (Monday to Thursday) and one concluding two-hour morning session (Friday). Evening sessions were requested by the volunteer trainees so as to allow for their participation in the afternoon extra-mural activities. The Friday - morning session was on graduation day and students planned to travel home later in the day for the week-end. The volunteer trainees preferred a full week training programme to weekly

sessions over a longer time frame. The latter arrangement would be at a greater risk to be jeopardized by the students' scheduled commitments, deterioration in enthusiasm, mass actions and other unscheduled activities.

Phase three explored the initial implementation of the peer-counselling structure through a field work assignment (Appendix 10) and discussions with the peer counsellors during support meetings.

Phase three occurred in the third and fourth term, allowing the peer counsellors sufficient time to select and document some of their post-training counselling experiences (Appendix 10).

Contact was maintained with the peer counsellors through two support meetings, one in the third and one in the fourth term.

A total of 221 (32 %) students were directly involved in the three interactive phases of the research project.

3.4.1 Phase one - Pre-training survey :

3.4.1.1 Research procedures :

The second year Guidance students (18) were briefed on essential research skills, how to approach respondents and to conduct a structured research interview. The research exercise is a required practical component of the Guidance course outline.

The novice researchers practiced their research skills in class through paired role-play, using the survey questionnaire (Appendix 1). The practice session emphasized the display of courtesy, how to place the respondent at ease about the survey objective and respondent anonymity and to take care not to prompt or influence the respondents in their responses to the questions.

The survey investigates the nature of the help-seeking behaviour of the students, perceptions and expectations of suitable peer counsellors and their training, the range of counselling needs and the appropriateness and feasibility of a peer counselling system.

Each research student was expected to conduct the survey interview with at least three other students : a first year, second year and third year student. No selection specifications with regard to gender, age and study courses were indicated to the research students. The survey respondents thus formed a convenience or nonrandom sample. The research students were allowed two weeks to approach their respondents, conduct the interviews and submit their completed questionnaires.

The gender and year of study of respondents are displayed in Table A, below.

Table A : Gender and year of study of respondents [n=55]

| | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|
| Year Group : | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Male : | 6 | 5 | 16 |
| Female : | 11 | 14 | 3 |

The completed questionnaires were sorted according to year groups and gender sub-groups.

The student researchers were divided into groups and each group completed a preliminary data analysis of a pack of questionnaires. The groups summarized and reported their findings as consolidation of their practical research exercise.

3.4.1.2 Research findings :

The results of the survey on the students' counsellor preferences in terms of access, comfort and needs, are summarized in Table B, on the next page.

Table B : Students' expressed preferences for delivery of counselling [n=55]

| Student Preference : | Peer Counsellor : | | Student Counsellor : | | Both Counsellors : | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Access | 11 | 17 | 15 | 10 | 1 | 1 |
| Comfort | 13 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Needs | 11 | 11 | 15 | 16 | 1 | 1 |

Six female students (21 %) indicated that they would never seek assistance from a peer counsellor.

Four male students (15 %) indicated that they would never seek assistance from a peer counsellor.

Peer counsellors are preferred because they :

- (a) share experiences and problems, are of the same age and gender - and will thus be expected to understand,
- (b) are more accessible in the residences, approachable and are considered easy to communicate with,
- (c) are expected to treat the user as an equal and allow free expression.

The student counsellor is preferred because of the following student perceptions and expectations of the student counsellor:

- (a) maturity, experience, professional training and skills, assurance of confidentiality, knowledge and the ability to assist with a wide range of issues,
- (b) non-exploitive, non-judgmental and tolerant attitudes.

The students (18 %) who indicated their apprehension in consulting with a peer, felt that peer counsellors are not mature or skilled enough and will not treat their disclosures as confidential, but may gossip about it.

Four students indicated both counsellors in the three areas of preference. Their choice between the two would depend on the problematic issue at hand and on the availability of either counsellor.

The student counsellor is the first choice, especially in academic matters, but if unavailable, a peer counsellor would be consulted. Peer counsellors are regarded as more suitable to deal with peer and personal matters, but the student counsellor would be entrusted with more serious dilemmas.

The gender of the counsellor appeared to be an important consideration in the choice between the two types of counsellors.

The survey also showed that the nature of the problematic or stressful experience, will affect the students' help-seeking behaviour and choice of confidante. Both female and male students confide in peers or consult staff and the student counsellor with respect to academic problems. Personal and interpersonal problems would be shared with a close friend, a spouse, relatives, parents and the pastor. A peer counsellor would be considered by both the male and female students for guidance in resolving personal and interpersonal problems.

3.4.1.3 Comments on the research procedures and findings :

Although the data is a positive indication that peer counselling may meet the need for an immediate and primary support structure, some oversights may affect the validity of the survey questionnaire. The questions did not clearly discriminate between specific problems that would determine the choice between the two counsellors. To compensate, the student researchers were instructed to rephrase question 5 (Appendix 1) in the interview to "Who would you go to most of the time, with most problems of this particular nature?"

The language medium of the questionnaire and the English competence of the student researchers may have influenced the quality of the survey interview and the recording of the responses.

During the interpretation and translation of the questions, certain responses could have been prompted or influenced.

The data may also reflect a bias toward peer counselling due to the student researchers' choice of respondents : other Guidance students, students from their own group or potential peer counsellor trainees. Some respondents may have been interviewed repeatedly. The research students could have ignored the briefing during the practice session and prompted certain responses, or in the worst instance filled out the questionnaires themselves or copied from one another. The fact that they had to write a research report on the survey findings, may have encouraged them to display the appropriate and required research behaviour. The selection of a random, rather than a convenience or nonrandom, sample of survey respondents would have rendered the survey results more useful in terms of reliability and validity.

A bilingual follow-up survey may be considered once the peer counsellors have established their trustworthy and competent role in promoting student well-being. The Guidance students will again conduct the survey interviews, but with a random selection of students, in a centralized venue and under lecturer supervision. A Zulu mother-tongue lecturer may be asked to assist with the translations and data analysis of the follow-up survey. This exercise may provide a more valid impression of students' help-seeking behaviour, perceptions and use of a peer counselling support structure.

An unforeseen benefit of the survey was that it occurred concurrently with the advertising campaign (posters and announcements) of the peer-counselling training programme. This created an additional

opportunity to raise awareness, interest and to inform the potential service users of the available support structure and the nature and extent of peer counsellor training.

3.4.2 Phase two - Training of volunteers :

3.4.2.1 Research procedures :

The posters, advertizing the training programme, were displayed at key socializing points on campus. The posters showed the initial training course outline, called for 12 volunteers, four from each year group and announced the details of a pre-training meeting. The pre-training registration meeting was held with 29 volunteers to establish suitable dates and times for the training sessions.

The positive interest shown in the training programme, surprised the trainer who eventually, after many appeals, accepted all the volunteers for the training programme. The distribution of the volunteer enrollment in (Table E) and completion of (Table F), the training programme, are displayed below.

Table E : Gender and year group of the enrolled trainees [n=29]

| | | | |
|--------------|---|----|----|
| Year Group : | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Male : | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Female : | 1 | 11 | 10 |

Table F : Gender and year group of the trainees who qualified [n=23]

| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|----|
| Year Group : | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Male : | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Female : | 0 | 7 | 10 |

Twelve Guidance students (52 %), completed the training programme.

One first year student felt uncomfortable in the group and the other five students who withdrew from the training programme had tests and choir practice scheduled for the same evenings. They were, however keen to complete the training at a later stage.

The initial training programme (Appendix 2) had to be revised and condensed to accommodate of the volunteers' extra-mural activities and preference for two-hourly, instead of three-hourly training sessions. The training programme could not be extended into the following week, or any other week.

The adapted training programme (Appendix 3) focussed on the acquisition of the absolute essential verbal and non-verbal helping skills. Peer-counselling applications were limited to crisis management. The other adaptations included a shorter refreshment break and less group building activities.

The ultimate goal was to use the first training programme as a platform from which to customize an appropriate training programme for the College. The training programme had to be developed by the students, for the students, to effectively and functionally address the peer counsellor and user needs and the specific issues and concerns relevant to the particular student context.

In the first session the trainees signed three contracts : a contract of commitment, recognition and a declaration of confidentiality (Appendix 4 (a), (b) & (c)). The contracts set the tone for the learning environment, which attempted to encourage the adherence to appropriate standards, mutual respect, non-critical and supportive participation. Openness, sharing of ideas and discussions were encouraged, specifically pertaining to the cultural interpretations of some of the verbal and non-verbal counselling skills and the natural help-seeking and help-providing behaviour of the students.

Opportunities to learn from the participants were also created. The trainees were encouraged to give examples of how they would apply the verbal counselling skills in their mother-tongue.

An awareness of ethical standards and guidelines were developed through group discussions on the relevance of principles relating to human rights, respect, honesty, integrity, confidentiality, values, personal needs and motivations for helping, as it pertains to peer-counselling practice.

Each training session consisted of four parts : (1) introduction, revision, overview of training goals, (2) a lecturette, (3) practical application and (4) feedback, debriefing and assessment of goal-attainment.

A session outline and summary was visible on flip charts at the start of every session as an orientation to the session goals. This was reviewed during, and at the end of the session as revision and to establish how well the goals had been achieved. It was also referred to in the following session as to consolidate skills and to resolve uncertainties. A refreshment break indicated the session midway point. The lecturette built on the activities and discussions of buzz groups (five to six students). The trainees could take notes from the trainer's flip charts and the buzz group charts, which were put up and remained on the wall through out the training. The trainees were also encouraged to do the self- study, as outlined in the library reading list (Appendix 9). Theory was kept to a minimum and augmented with exercises, social games and ice-breakers from Scannell and Newstrom (1991) and Rooth (1995).

The participants were also requested to write a summary after each session on what they have accomplished and to write down examples for role-plays and simulations from their own realities on index cards. The cards were collected in a box and drawn from during the practical application of skills.

The practical application of skills included demonstrations, simulations, role-plays, fish bowl exercises and evaluations (Appendix 7) and application of the "DASIE" problem management model (Appendix . Maximum time was devoted to skills application, development and feedback discussions after role-play observations. Unfortunately the size of the group inhibited full individual participation and the opportunity for everyone to apply, demonstrate and assess their skills.

The trainees completed an evaluation questionnaire (Appendix 6 (a) & (b)) at the end of each training session. Honest, specific and spontaneous opinions were encouraged as the information would be used to develop guidelines for improving and customizing the training programme.

The evaluation forms for sessions one to four (Appendix 6 (a)), were immediately canvassed for feasible suggestions to adapt the current training content and procedures.

The evaluation form for session five differed slightly from the previous four. This evaluation considered the training programme in its entirety and the trainees' suggestions for future training programmes. A secure suggestion box was available in the training venue for comments and suggestions throughout the course of academic year.

The volunteer trainees completed a pre-training - and post-training profile questionnaire prior to the start, and shortly after completion of the training programme. The objective with the profile questionnaires, as explained to the trainees, was to examine their help-seeking behaviour, anticipations and experiences of the training programme and their role as a peer counsellor.

3.4.2.2 Research findings :

Training programme evaluation questionnaires :

The overall scoring of the training sessions on the indicated dimensions (Question 1, Appendix

6 (a) & 6 (b)) was consistently a 4 or 5. The group dynamics dimension was occasionally scored at 3. The size of the group may have contributed to the occasional lower score. Skills development dimension was frequently rated at 3, the trainees also indicated verbally to the trainer that they would appreciate more opportunities to practice their skills during the training sessions.

The size of the group and the duration of the sessions restricted the opportunity for extensive, individual skills practice.

The trainees approved of the structure of the training sessions, were comfortable with the amount of theory and appreciated the refreshment break. They would have preferred less “paper work”, more notes and a smaller training group. The buzz group activities, sharing and discussions were found to be functional, enjoyable and enriching. A strategy to assess, self, peer or trainer, their performances during all the experiential activities, was also requested.

The individual comments on the training content and training methods were organized according to what the trainees would like more of during the sessions and what they want to know more about. The sessions should include more demonstrations, role plays, simulations and fish bowl exercises, all dealing with relevant, real life situations and issues. The trainees wanted more skills practice, specifically applying the “DASIE” problem management model (Appendix 8).

The trainees indicated that they would like to know more about group counselling, working with teenagers and how they can build their self confidence in their new helping roles.

The trainees requested that training sessions cover special issues and concerns : HIV/Aids counselling, substance abuse, child abuse, rape counselling, stress , conflict and crisis management. These issues, as well as personal life skills development, were also requested for further training

programmes. In response to these requests, it was decided to include crisis management in the last session of the training course.

The trainees experienced the training programme as an opportunity for information acquisition, skills development personal growth, especially in terms of : problem -solving, communication, helping, tolerance, positive regard, confidence, observation, empathy and crisis management.

In response to the trainees' feedback, the following adjustments will be considered for future training programmes :

(a) sessions will need to allow more time for skills practice and the opportunity for individuals to assess their performance. This will also assist with corrective and entrenching processes in skills development,

(b) video-recordings could be a useful tool in demonstrating, evaluating and correcting skills development,

(c) trainees will be also be required to fulfill training functions, for example in preparing and presenting training sessions, simulations or work shops. This not only capitalizes on existing resources and skills , but assists the trainees in life skills development and the transfer of skills between different contexts,

(d) a workbook containing notes, guidelines and exercises for independent study and practice, could also be considered for future training programmes. The workbook will also have a journal section in which the trainee will log all helping experiences, independent research and creative writing,

(e) funding of a peer counsellor T-shirt or a badge will be investigated. Some peer counsellors indicated that a type of insignia will help to publicize their support activities, establish their roles, especially in future projects where new students will need to identify them,

(f) an observer could assist the trainer with evaluative observations of, and comments on, the training procedures. The observer will interact with the trainees to supplement the feedback from the evaluation and profile questionnaires.

Trainees' pre- and post-training profiles :

The trainees' help-seeking behaviour reflected the same tendencies as identified in the survey.

The nature of the problematic or stressful experience, will affect the students' choice of confidante. Both female and male students confide in peers or consult staff and the student counsellor with respect to academic problems. Personal and interpersonal problems would be shared with a close friend, a spouse, relatives, parents and the pastor. A peer counsellor would be considered by both the male and female students for guidance in resolving personal and interpersonal problems.

All the trainees indicated some experience in a helping role : to a pupil, friend, peer, close friend or spouse, relative and fellow church member.

The reasons indicated for enrollment in the training programme are :

- (a) an interest in pursuing a career in the helping professions,
- (b) the training would be helpful in their people-orientated future careers,
- (c) to develop own personal life skills, interpersonal skills and the capacity for personal problem solving,
- (d) to develop counselling skills to help peers and play a pro-active helping role in their schools and social communities.

All the trainees indicated that they would want to function as peer counsellors on campus to contribute to the well-being of their peers, to encourage, support and assist in problem and crisis

management. The general opinion was that peer counselling would fill a void in the support structures on campus. A peer counselling structure would be functional because it offers users a wider choice in support, is socially and physically accessible, informal and has the capacity to address issues and experiences of mutual concern more meaningfully than a lecturer-counsellor.

The trainees also pointed out that a peer counselling structure will only be functional if the peer counsellors adhere to a code of conduct, are responsible and active students. These points were reiterated during the training programme.

The peer counsellors' actual gains outweighed their expected gains from their participation in the peer counselling programme. The expected gains were stated in general terms, relating to acquisition of life, interpersonal, social, helping and personal skills.

The actual gains were more specific and are listed as follows :

- (a) new careers interest, improved teaching skills, teamwork skills and employability,
- (b) better self-management, acceptance and understanding of self and others, increased self-knowledge, confidence, personal coping and problem-solving skills,
- (c) social, interpersonal and communication, helping and crisis management skills, respect, tolerance, patience, empathy, understanding of, and respect for ethical guidelines.

3.4.2.3 Comments on the research procedures and findings :

Strategies to attract more males, first year students and students from a wider variety of study courses, to the peer-counselling programme will need to be devised for the future training programmes. Limitations on the training group size is required to ensure the quality of training and the level of skills acquisition.

The training programme was a worthwhile and functional experience, for both the trainer and the trainees. The trainees not only developed the planned helping skills, but also indicated specific areas in which they experienced personal and social development. They also indicated a transfer of their skills to their other leadership and community roles. The question remains whether the volunteers recruited for the training programme, are in fact “natural helpers”, or perceived by the student community as suitable peer counsellors.

The training programme was too short : in training session and in overall duration. Longer training sessions, at least three hours, would allow for extended skills practice, application and assessment. A longer training programme, at least thirty hours, could facilitate the entrenchment of helping skills and the application to the areas identified for follow-up training, thus sufficiently preparing the peer counsellors to adequately and functionally deal with their own developmental needs and the concerns and problematic experiences of their peers.

3.4.3 Phase three - Post-training field work :

3.4.3.1 Research procedures :

The final data collection phase analyzed the peer counsellors’ field work assignment (Appendix 10) and the recorded discussions at the two support meetings.

The peer counsellors were briefed on their field work assignment at short meeting within the first week after completion of the training. The assignment required that they document some of their post-training counselling experiences. User anonymity in the recording of their data was emphasized. The field work assignments were submitted for analysis, towards the end of the fourth term.

3.4.3.2 Research findings :

Data analysis of the field work assignment provided information on the performance of the peer counselling system over a four month period : problems dealt with, efficacy, user profiles and the implications of these for the provision of additional training and support to the peer counsellors.

A user profile of the 119 documented peer counselling experiences appear in Table C.

The problems the peer counsellors dealt with are summarized in Table D.

Table C : Gender and year of study of service-users

| Year Group : | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|----|----|----|
| Male : | 14 | 19 | 13 |
| Female : | 18 | 24 | 31 |

Table D : Problems dealt with by the peer counsellors

| Problem area : | % dealt with (119) |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Finance | 8 % |
| Residential | 3 % |
| Management | 3 % |
| Family | 15 % |
| Social | 2 % |
| Emotional | 15 % |
| Relationship | 27 % |
| health | 13 % |
| Academic | 14 % |

The peer counsellors suggested 49 referrals (41 %) to their users. Referrals were made to a student counsellor, another peer counsellor, lecturers, residential staff, the student representative council and

management structures. In most cases the referrals were rather an encouragement to consult with parents, other relatives, their pastor or doctor. Outside agencies referred to were the career centre, the clinic and social welfare agency.

The peer counsellors thought that the counselling experience was helpful to the user in all of the documented experiences. The following reasons were given :

- (a) the users acquired additional information, could generate alternative solutions, accepted responsibility for the resolution of the problematic situation, identify and activate alternative support resources,
- (b) the peer counsellor was available to share the experience with, the user could express feelings, be comforted and tension was reduced,
- (c) in some instances the peer counsellor mediated between the parties involved and facilitated the restoration of the relationship,
- (d) The peer counsellors also received positive feedback from the user : “felt better”, “situation improved”, “could focus on college work” and “set priorities”,
- (e) casual observations of the users indicated “a change in attitude”, “more confidence” and an “improvement in academics” .

The peer counsellors felt that they were trusted, approachable, accessible and that the users perceived them as “friends”, “caring” and “a natural helper”. They are sources of information and experience as they share similar problems, mutual concerns, interests and social activities with the users.

Some users were referred to a peer counsellor by a lecturer, or another student who have had a helpful peer counselling experience.

Reasons for non-use relate to lack of awareness, trust, unwillingness or embarrassment to disclose personal information, uncertainties about confidentiality and the competencies of the peer counsellor. Some students fear gossip, loss of integrity, criticism and being laughed at if they reveal their troubles to a peer counsellor.

Discussions at the first support meeting focused on strategies to promote the peer counselling support structure and additional opportunities for the peer counsellors to practice their newly acquired skills. The peer counsellors requested a work shop on study skills to help themselves but also their peers who have expressed a need for assistance in this area. Notes on study skills were issued and the Guidance students in the group were requested to schedule and facilitate a work shop for all the peer counsellors. This, regrettably never materialized due to mass action disturbances prior to the mid year vacation.

The second support meeting explored their counselling experiences. All the peer counsellors indicated that they have seen students requesting assistance in a variety of issues and that they are documenting these experiences for their fieldwork assignment. No uncertainties about the fieldwork assignment were indicated. The service users were mainly friends or acquaintances, students who knew about their training and students who are familiar with the peer counsellors in their other positions of leadership.

The issues explored during the counselling encounters were mainly of an interpersonal nature. The individual peer counsellors assisted both male and female users. The positive feedback they received from the users, direct and through casual observations, developed the peer counsellors' confidence in their new roles.

The peer counsellors were advised to structure and display a notice of their availability. Too many casual and spontaneous counselling encounters may infringe on their privacy, interrupt their schedules and disturb their priorities.

3.4.3.3 Comments on the research procedures and findings :

The broad problem categories indicated on the field work assignment (Appendix 10) did not allow for clear, distinctive and exact descriptions of the problems actually dealt with. This information would have been useful to plan follow-up training or workshops for the peer counsellors. The problem distribution, does however, indicate that further training in study skills, emotional development, relationship and health issues will enable the peer counsellors to improve on the range and quality of the assistance rendered.

Referral agents, including other available support networks and professional helpers, could be invited to training sessions as guest speakers or approached to conduct work shops with the peer counsellors. This may enable the peer counsellors to strengthen their support network and make the required, appropriate and functional referrals.

The peer counsellors' reflection on the helpfulness of the counselling experience showed that they understood and applied the acquired helping skills and -concepts. The reflection on the reasons for service use and non-use, would hopefully encourage the peer counsellors to contemplate their helping roles, develop their helping skills and promote, protect and adhere to a peer counselling code of conduct.

It is possible that some of the peer counsellors may have fabricated the information on the field work assignment. This practice could have been counteracted by supplementing the feedback from the peer counsellors with an anonymous user questionnaire on the appropriateness, and helpfulness of the peer-counselling support structure.

It may be considered to invite all students in leadership positions, or with specific community interest, to the next peer counsellor training course. Although not all of them may decide to function as peer counsellors, they could certainly apply their helping and communication skills in their other student roles, to improve relationships, learning environments and the quality of interactions.

The peer counsellors found the support meetings to be valuable opportunities for sharing dilemmas, encouragement, addressing uncertainties and consulting the resources in the Guidance classroom. A general feeling was that these meeting should be scheduled on a weekly, rather than a bi-weekly basis. Despite the enthusiasm for the support meetings, the trainer only managed to schedule two meetings with the peer counsellors. The mass action and the delayed mid-year examinations contributed to this situation. Unfortunately additional opportunities for training, skills development and discussion of other scheduled items, like the compilation of a code of conduct, were sacrificed. For future support meetings alternating recorders may be appointed and the minutes distributed to the peer counsellors as part of their administrative and record-keeping duties.

3.5 Constraints of the research project :

The constraints are grouped in three main categories : time constraints, limited resources and the influence of the medium of instruction.

The training programme had to be early in the year to allow for a meaningful investigation of the impact, if any. The first half of the year allows little time for additional extra-mural activities, as the college programme engages students in a variety of activities ranging from the graduation, regional sports events, cultural competitions, teaching practice and the mid-year examinations. The students who showed an interest in the peer counselling training programme were also involved in afternoon activities, for example library duty, tutoring, sports and committee meetings. A slot on the daily academic time-table or weekend sessions, were implausible considerations.

The five modest, consecutive two-hour evening sessions, suited more or less everyone.

Evening sessions restricted the choice of available training venues. The micro-teaching rooms with video facilities were out of the question after hours. The Guidance classroom, fortunately furnished for group activities, was the only real option. No additional staff members were available to assist the trainer or contribute their skills to the training programme. Utilization of the resources or expertise of community organizations and individuals in the helping professions, could not be funded.

An apparent deficit exists with in terms of documented regional, or even national, peer counselling practices and programmes. Existing training manuals are all of an American or Canadian origin. So is the vast majority of literature on peer counselling applications.

The language medium of the training and research procedures was English, the second language of the peer counsellor trainees, student researchers and respondents. The English language proficiency of the participants may have influenced how :

- (a) the data was collected, recorded and meanings interpreted,
- (b) the trainees internalized and applied the training content.

Despite all the constraints mentioned above, the research project created the opportunity for in-sourcing, innovation and to maximize the deployment of existing potential and available resources. The ability for flexible and innovative in-sourcing, may be considered as a prerequisite for functional and effective peer-counselling programme implementation at under-resourced institutions, that do not have the capacity to out-source.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS :

The method of content analysis, proposed by Svensson (1986), was applied to code the qualitative data extracted from the questionnaires and the documented discussions. The coding process entailed four stages : developing a holistic impression of the data, extracting natural meaning units and identifying emerging categories and themes in terms of these natural meaning units. A natural meaning unit is a statement by the respondent which refers to a single, limited but recognizable aspect of the respondent's total experience (Stones, 1998).

The natural meaning units were extracted and documented, where possible, in the respondent's exact wording. The categories and themes that emerged from the natural meaning units were synthesized in the following six critical dimensions of peer-counselling programme implementation and management.

4.1 Peer Counsellor roles and functions :

The survey indicated that both the student counsellor and a peer counselling support structure have a role and function in addressing the counselling needs of the student community.

A peer-counselling support structure has the potential to promote student well-being on a primary level, providing accessible and appropriate assistance with mutual concerns and context specific issues, for example student health, academic and relationship problems. The peer-counselling support structure will allow the user more choice in terms of when, where and from whom support is requested.

The survey showed that the problem area for which the user is seeking assistance will influence the user's choice of counselling support. Some students expressed a preference for a counsellor of the same gender and language group, although the type of problem situation at hand and the availability of the counsellor would override this preference.

The survey and the profile questionnaires indicated the following specific roles and functions for the College peer counsellors :

- (a) referral agents to the secondary counselling structure and support networks,
- (b) mediators in residential or management conflict, bridging agents between students and staff,
- (c) information agents, for example in new student orientation,
- (d) group leaders for specific interest groups, running work shops on student interests, for example life skills, study management, relationship building, HIV/Aids education, financial planning,
- (e) pro-active and preventative guidance with personal problems, conflict and crisis management in the residences,
- (f) organization of community projects, for example careers guidance and sexuality education in the surrounding high schools.

4.2 Peer Counsellor selection procedures :

The survey and pre-training profiles showed that one of the selection criteria should be based on the display of certain characteristics and attitudes. The following attributes and attitudes are perceived to be displayed by suitable peer counsellors :

- (a) friendly, approachable, sociable and well-mannered, "good human relations",
- (b) caring, dedicated to assist and offer comfort, kind, considerate, patient, tolerant, understanding, good listener, have "others best interests at heart", respect for others,
- (c) reliable, honest, responsible, trustworthy, accountable,
- (d) good tempered, exemplary behaviour, "high integrity", "sound values", positive outlook on life, positive self-concept, self-confidence, sense of humour, "down to earth",
- (e) mature, leadership qualities, experience, coping skills, "had problems in the past", willing to "share something of themselves", problem solver, "see problem from many angles".

The students felt that the enrollment in the peer counsellor training programme should not be restricted. Peer counsellors should only be selected after completion of the training programme. The following criteria and guidelines for final selection were indicated :

- (a) the display of above mentioned attributes and attitudes,
- (b) performance during the training programme,
- (c) general behaviour and performance in college related areas,
- (d) final selection interviews,
- (e) student, staff and trainer nominations.

The peer counsellor group should also be representative in terms of gender, year groups, class groups and the dormitories.

4.3 Peer Counsellor training - content and procedures :

The survey respondents indicated the following guidelines for appropriate peer counsellor training :

- (a) the development of communication, listening, helping and problem solving skills,
- (b) the development of an understanding of peer issues, concerns and problems and the capacity to deal with these competently and functionally,
- (c) exposure to professional helping agents and an accessible referral and support network.

The trainees found the training approach, content and procedures to be adequate, functional, understandable, manageable and applicable within the particular student context.

The trainees' feedback on the organization, facilitation, content and skills of the training programme, indicated the following suggestions :

- (a) smaller groups to allow everyone an opportunity to role-play in every session,
- (b) training sessions to be scheduled on the academic time-table, in three to five hour slots,
- (c) more time for skills practice, "real life" simulations and practical applications of the "DASIE" problem management model,
- (d) notes or a workbook to supplement the activities and discussions in the training sessions,
- (e) skills training to be extended to group counselling applications,
- (f) a practical "examination" for trainees to "qualify" as peer counsellors.

The positive outcomes of the training programme ranged from life and helping skills acquisition, personal and career development to changes in attitudes. Although the trainees felt the training had adequately prepared them to establish their role as College peer counsellors, an unanimous need was expressed for further, advanced and continuous training.

The nature and extent of the ongoing training were described as follows :

- (a) personal life skills development, for example stress and conflict management,
- (b) training sessions with outside helping agencies and the opportunity to see helping professionals “in action in their career world”,
- (c) skills and information on special issues , for example substance abuse, rape, HIV/Aids, and how to conduct work shops and group counselling on these issues.

4.4 Ethical and cultural considerations :

The survey indicated that the students perceived the expertise, training, professionalism and assurance of confidentiality to be important considerations in deciding whether to seek assistance from a peer counsellor or a student counsellor.

A major concern expressed in the survey was that peer counsellors would not maintain confidentiality. They felt that a respected member of the student community, someone who is regarded as a role model and who display suitable characteristics and attitudes would have the capacity to exercise their peer counselling role in accordance with a code of conduct.

The student community should have insight in this code of conduct to assure the quality and effectiveness of the peer counselling support structure. The protection of, and respect for, the rights, integrity and interests of the user will need to be addressed in the peer counsellor code of conduct.

The profile and training questionnaires indicated that the peer counsellors are aware of how their conduct, specifically with respect to confidentiality, will influence the effectiveness of the peer support structure. They displayed an understanding of the required ethical standards and an appreciation for the cultural sensitivity demonstrated by the trainer during the training sessions.

Cross-cultural counselling skills and issues were at this early stage of the peer-counselling training programme not considered, as the student community is largely mono-cultural.

4.5 Peer Counsellor supervision and support structures :

The peer counsellors requested the use of a resource and consultation room, preferably in the residences. A duty roster could co-ordinate the peer counsellors' availability and functions.

The resource room would also be the venue for support meetings. These meetings should be held weekly to develop peer counsellor support and camaraderie, discuss mutual concerns, plan activities and special projects and to strategize resolutions to dilemmas or crises that may occur on campus from time to time.

The peer counsellors also expressed a need for a programme of continuous training. This could take the form of monthly work shops on personal life skills development, counselling skills development and entrenchment, information on pressing issues and how to manage certain recurring problem areas.

Guest speakers, trainers and professional helpers may be invited to these monthly work shops to address the peer counsellors on special issues, problems or concerns. Regular contact should be maintained with the peer counsellors' referral and support network. An award or insignia should be considered for peer counsellors who excel in their service delivery.

4.6 Programme evaluation strategies :

The formative and summative evaluation of the training programme was generated by three questionnaires : the training session evaluations, post-training profiles and the field work assignment.

The formative evaluation indicated the following :

- (a) the ten hour introductory training programme in essential counselling skills was described by the trainees as an adequate and functional preparation for their helping roles and functions,
- (b) the training content requires enrichment in terms of information and skills on group counselling and special student concerns, for example study managements and HIV/AIDS education,
- (c) the training procedures were appropriate, but more time is required for skills practice,
- (d) a formal and structured assessment strategy, that could be used by all the participants in the training sessions for the evaluation of performance and skills application, is required to supplement the evaluations and feedback from the trainer,
- (e) a final post-training selection procedure should be in place,
- (f) the 23 peer counsellors documented 119 counselling experiences, providing assistance to students in areas mainly related to interpersonal, emotional, academic and health problems.

The summative evaluation indicated the following :

- (a) the volunteer trainees expressed personal, social and career gains from their participation in the training programme,
- (b) the peer counsellors perceived their support to be helpful to the service-users they encountered,
- (c) that peer counselling could be considered as potentially functional and effective primary support structure for the College student community.

An insightful supplement to the formative and summative evaluation procedures would have been the perspectives and input of an observer during the training programme, service-user questionnaires, a post-implementation survey and pre-training, during training and post-training peer counsellor performance assessment strategies.

5. DISCUSSION :

The findings, as they relate to the dimensions of peer-counselling roles and functions, peer counsellor selection, training, support and supervision, ethical and cultural considerations and programme evaluations, are compared with the practices of the various peer-counselling programmes discussed in the literature review. Guidelines for the implementation of future peer-counselling training programmes at the College, are also indicated .

5.1 Peer Counsellor roles and functions :

The indicated peer counsellor roles and functions of primary support, information and referral agents correspond with the roles and functions identified by D'Andrea & Salovey (1983), Giddan (1988); Kehayan (1993), Myrick (1993) and Scheepers (1997).

Giddan (1988), Cowie and Sharp (1996) and Scheepers (1997) state that a peer counselling support structure does not replace the existing professional counselling structure. A complementary relationship exists between the professional, or the formal counselling structure, and the peer counselling support structure. Peer counselling extends the range of support services offered, allows for wider access to support and freedom of choice with respect to who is consulted when, where and about which particular area of concern (Scheepers, 1997). This complementary relationship is confirmed by the students' acceptance of both types of counsellors and the notion to choose between the two support structures on the grounds of availability and the type of problem the student is experiencing.

Locke and Zimmerman (1987) confirm the preference for either a professional or peer counsellor depends on the concern or problematic experience involved. Students who indicated a preference

for a peer counsellor, based it on the physical, social and emotional accessibility of the peer counsellor and the peer counsellor's supportive understanding of the shared experiences and concerns. These reasons are indicated in the literature as explanations for the wide implementation, acceptability, appropriateness and effectiveness of peer counselling support structures (Carr, 1981; D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Giddan, 1988; Kehayan, 1992; Myrick, 1993; Cowie & Sharp, 1996; Scheepers, 1977).

The findings indicated that the peer counsellors wanted to extend their support services to group counselling, workshops on special concerns and interests and community projects. These extended pro-active functions are reflected in the literature (McIntyre et al., 1982; Giddan & Austin, 1982; Giddan, 1988; Garner et al., 1989; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Kehayan, 1992; Myrick, 1993) and indicative of the specific concerns and needs that exist within a particular peer-counselling context.

The roles and functions that peer counsellors perform within a specific context, have obvious implications for the peer-counselling training content and procedures. The training programme should be tailored to the user needs and the preparation required by the peer counsellors to functionally and effectively address these needs. Adequate, appropriate and continuous training, designed for well-defined roles and functions, is seen to be an approach that limits the potential for detrimental peer counselling outcomes and ethical dilemmas to occur (Cowie & Sharp, 1996; Lewis & Lewis, 1996).

The main concerns the College peer counsellors dealt with over a four month period were related to academic, interpersonal and particular relationship issues. This corresponds with the campus peer counsellor roles and functions indicated by Salovey and D'Andrea (1984) and Giddan (1988).

The peer counsellors felt that their support services were not fully utilized. This was probably because the peer-counselling support structure had little time to establish itself as a popular, alternative and trusted support structure. One way to increase service utilization is through publicity. The peer counsellors were not required to plan and execute their own publicity campaign, a peer counsellor activity mentioned by Kehayan (1992).

Further peer counsellor roles and functions suggested, and to be considered, for future training programmes at the College are :

- (a) recruiting, selecting and supporting new peer counsellors,
- (b) designing and conducting training sessions,
- (c) planning and publicizing the range of their support and information services,
- (d) planning their own duty roster and managing a resource and consultation room.

These activities were identified by McIntyre et al. (1982) and Kehayan (1992) and may promote ownership of, and commitment to, rendering a functional and quality peer support service.

5.2 Peer Counsellor selection procedures :

The response to the first peer-counselling training programme at the College was overwhelming and the initial group of 29 was too large to ensure quality control in terms of training and peer counsellor performance. Selection procedures are employed to recruit a manageable number of suitable trainees. Selection procedures would be considered for the future, to ensure that a group of committed, motivated and responsible trainees, with a required base level of competency in communication and helping skills, are selected for the training programme.

The selection procedure considered, accommodates most of the suggestions and preferences indicated by the students. The future selection procedure for the College peer-counselling training programme would include the following strategies :

(a) pre-training : a representative selection of volunteers and nominees based on performance during group interviews and role plays,

(b) post-training : a representative final selection based on self, peer and trainer evaluations of performance during training and a supervised practicum.

This customized selection procedure corresponds with the pervasive procedures noted in the literature (Samuels & Samuels, 1975; Carr & Saunders, 1980; Blain & Brusko 1985; Giddan, 1988; Garner et al., 1989; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Corn & Moore, 1992; Kehayan 1992; Myrick, 1993).

The spectrum of personality characteristics and attitudes mentioned by the students for consideration as selection criteria, confirm that suitable peer counsellors are perceived to have what could be called a "helping personality" (Blain & Brusko 1985; Garner et al., 1989; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Corn & Moore, 1992; Phillip & Sturkie, 1991 & 1993; Kehayan 1992; Myrick, 1993). This particular personality profile is noted in the literature as a popular selection criterium (ibid) and an essential factor in the success and effectiveness of a peer-counselling programme (Downe et al., 1986; Kehayan, 1992; Myrick, 1993; Cowie & Sharp, 1996, Lewis & Lewis, 1996; Sharp, 1996).

The findings indicated that the students preferred an unrestricted enrollment in the peer counselling training programme, followed by only a final post-training selection procedure. All the peer-counselling training programmes explored in the literature review, applied a pre-training selection

procedure, followed in some instances by a further final post-training selection procedure.

The reason for requesting unrestricted enrollment may be that the training programme was perceived to be, and experienced as, beneficial to all students, not only the trainees who really want to function as College peer counsellors. A pre-training selection strategy is, however, required as the quality of training for large groups or multiple sub-groups is affected by the lack of resources at the College.

5.3 Peer Counsellor training - content and procedures :

The positive outcomes of participation in the training programme, in terms of personal and skills development of the peer counsellor trainees, are in accordance with the findings of Downe et al. (1986), Myrick (1993) and Du Toit and Winfield (1994).

Trainer and trainee feedback indicated that the group was too large, which contributed to the occasional negative group dynamics and the limited opportunities for individual skills practice.

A group of only 10 to 12 trainees per training session, as stipulated by Carr and Saunders (1980), France and Gallagher (1984), Bowman (1986), Garner et al. (1989), Gougeon (1989), Tindall and Salmon-White (1990), Phillips and Sturkie (1991 & 1993), would be considered for future training programmes.

Time-tabled sessions of three to five hours were requested by the trainees. Although this was considered and has been practiced (Carr & Saunders, 1980; De Rosenroll & Dey, 1990; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991), the College academic time-table cannot accommodate peer-counselling training sessions. Sessions longer than two hours are also difficult to schedule for the afternoon, as the students who indicated an interest in the peer-counselling training programme, seem to be overly committed to other extra-mural activities..

The content of the training programme corresponded with the content requirements indicated by the potential service-users in the survey. The trainees felt that the basic skills course was adequate and appropriate in preparing them for their initial peer counselling roles and functions.

There was however, an expressed need for advanced, follow-up and continuous training. The extended training should include life skills development, special contextual issues and concerns, preparation for specific projects and establishing networks with community helping agencies and resources. This resembles the content of many training programmes that starts with the core helping skills and continues with training in applying the core skills to various contextual concerns and projects (Carr & Saunders, 1980; D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991).

The request for group counselling skills is unique, although it may refer to the facilitative function of peer counsellors in campus self-help groups, identified by Giddan and Austin (1982) and Giddan (1988).

The training methods were regarded as functional and enjoyable, but not enough opportunities for skills practice were available. The approach of D'Andrea and Salovey (1983) using a theory and discussion session, followed by a session only for skills practice and evaluation may be considered for a future training programme.

The following strategies, not used in the initial programme, could be considered for future peer-counselling training programmes :

(a) involvement of the trainees in their own learning through presentations, a journal, homework assignments and a resource workbook or file (Letsebe 1984 & 1988; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990, Phillips & Sturkie, 1993),

(b) self- and peer performance assessment through checklists and feedback discussions on audiovisual recordings (Bowman & Myrick, 1980; McIntyre et al., 1982; D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Cowie & Sharp, 1996),

(c) involvement of community helping resources in the training programme (Letsebe, 1984 & 1988; Gougeon, 1989; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Phillips & Sturkie, 1993).

The peer counsellor trainees indicated that a “qualifying practical exam” at the end of the training would be appropriate. This may correspond with the practicum sessions, or supervised peer counselling activities, incorporated by Carr and Saunders (1980) and Phillips and Sturkie (1991) in their respective training programmes.

5.4 Ethical and cultural considerations :

Professionalism and assurance of confidentiality were indicated by the College students as determining factors in their choice between consulting with a student counsellor (an academic staff member) or a peer counsellor. This, and the peer counsellors’ understanding of the role of ethical standards in service provision, support the practice to :

(a) expose peer counselling trainees to ethical standards, -issues and human rights (Giddan, 1988; Letsebe, 1988; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Phillips & Sturkie, 1991 & 1993; Cowie & Sharp, 1996),

(b) develop and commit peer counsellors to a code of conduct (Giddan, 1988; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990),

(c) base a selection criterium on the potential peer counsellor’s social esteem and capacity to exercise the peer counselling role in accordance with a code of conduct (Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Cowie & Sharp 1996).

The collaborative development, publicity of, and commitment to, a contextualized peer counsellor code of conduct will be considered as a priority for future peer-counselling training programmes at the College.

The trainer's display of cultural and language sensitivity is a functional practice when training groups that are of a different language or cultural orientation and that may experience difficulty with English as the training language medium and the application of the counselling skills in a different cultural context. Contextualizing role plays, drawing on the trainees' perspectives and experiences and encouraging discussions on the cultural implications of the verbal and non-verbal counselling skills (Letsebe, 1984 & 1988) were appropriate for, and experienced as helpful and constructive, in the College peer-counselling trainees.

5.5 Peer Counsellor supervision and support structures :

The lack of appropriate and adequate supervision and support structures, may have adversely effected the quality and extent of the skills acquisition and skills application of the peer counsellors and support services rendered by the peer counsellors. The functions of supervision and support are documented in the literature as essential for the maintenance, development, quality and success of the peer counselling service (Carr, 1981; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

Supervision structures to consider for future training programmes are :

- (a) more experienced peer counsellors to supervise, and act as resource and support agents for, the new trainees,
- (b) the allocation of individual peer counsellors to interested, committed and suitably qualified staff members or available community resource persons, for regular, supportive consultations (Letsebe 1984 & 1988).

The peer counsellors' requests for a special resource and consultation room, awards and insignia, community resource networking, advanced and continuous training and weekly support meetings, are in accordance with most of the peer counsellor training and support practices of the programmes explored in the literature review. The indicated content and functions of the support meetings and continued training, emphasize the importance of aligning support and training with user and peer counsellor needs to ensure the functional effectiveness of the peer support structure (Morrill et al., 1987; Kehayan, 1982; Myrick, 1993; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

Priorities for future peer-counselling training programmes would be the :

- (a) planning and implementation of an introductory counselling skills course,
- (b) planning and implementation of continued training courses and workshops for the application of skills in various relevant areas of concern and interest,
- (c) weekly support meetings to monitor and mediate the quality and extent of the skills acquisition and skills application of the peer counsellors and support services rendered by the peer counsellors.

5.6 Programme evaluation strategies :

The summative and formative evaluation strategies revealed important and useful data in terms of :

- (a) the appropriateness, functionality and feasibility of a College peer-counselling support structure,
- (b) service-user perspectives, needs and peer counsellor training needs,
- (c) appropriate modifications to the content and procedures of the current peer counselling training programme,
- (d) establishing appropriate guidelines for peer counsellor selection, support and supervision and peer counsellor performance assessment.

This study thus confirms the value of continued summative and formative programme evaluations in the development of an effective, functional and customized peer counselling support structure (Downe et al., 1986; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990).

The impact and level of goal-attainment of the peer counselling support structure could have been assessed by supplementing the formative and summative evaluation strategies and feedback mechanisms with :

(a) a programme observer,

(b) a post-training and implementation survey (D'Andrea & Salovey, 1983; Cowie & Sharp, 1996),

(c) service-user questionnaires (McIntyre et al., 1982; Frisz & Lane, 1987; Cowie & Sharp, 1996),

(d) pre-training, during training and post-training assessment of skills acquisition and skills

application of the peer counsellors (France & Gallagher, 1984; Letsebe 1984; Blain & Brusko, 1985; Tindall & Salmon-White, 1990; Diver-Stamnes, 1991; Henriksen, 1991; Cowie & Sharp, 1996).

6. CONCLUSION :

The concluding remarks in this section confirms the feasibility and appropriateness of a peer counselling support structure at the particular college of education. The implications of this study for other similar type of investigations in different contexts are highlighted. The areas of peer- counselling programme implementation, requiring further research are also indicated.

6.1 The feasibility and appropriateness of peer counselling at the College :

The study showed that a peer counselling support structure can be considered as an appropriate and feasible strategy to :

- (a) provide in pastoral care,
- (b) extend and complement the support services offered by the existing staff counselling team and
- (c) develop and strengthen the existing natural and informal support networks.

The survey (Appendix 1) indicated, and the peer counsellors' field work assignment (Appendix 10) confirmed, that students turn to one another for support and assistance with problems relevant to their similar life experiences and mutual concerns. The peer counsellors perceived their support roles as functional and helpful because of their physical and social accessibility and their supportive understanding of student experiences and dilemmas.

A peer counselling training programme is a cost-effective, multi-functional and pro-active strategy to increase the number of students in helping roles and to develop their natural capacity to help themselves and others. Functional, effective utilization and development of peer support potential, is however effected by the quality, extent and content of the selection, training, supervision and support procedures.

Continuous, formative and summative evaluation is required to establish whether the peer-counselling programme is meeting the psycho-social needs of the student community and to identify areas that require modifications, to ensure continued and functional effective goal-attainment of the programme.

6.2 Implications of the research project :

A peer counselling support structure is not implemented to replace, or to function instead of, an existing staff or professional counselling service. Peer counselling is a strategy to provide a more accessible, immediate and pro-active support network to complement and extend the services rendered by the formal counselling structure.

The potential of a peer counselling support structure to provide in appropriate and adequate pastoral care, depends on the skill and resource capacity available at the institution to plan, implement and oversee the peer-counselling programme. As shown in the study, a peer counselling training programme can be initiated cost-effectively, with the following minimum resources : a committed and suitable group of trainees, a skilled trainer, an adequate support and supervisory structures, a suitable venue for group interactions and inexpensive teaching media.

The study suggests functional guidelines for the implementation and management of peer-counselling support structures at under-resourced institutions. These guidelines are outlined in terms of the following peer-counselling programme dimensions : peer counsellor roles and functions, peer counsellor selection procedures, peer counsellor training, ethical and cultural considerations, peer counsellor support and supervision and programme evaluations. The way in which these dimensions are addressed by programme implementors, may affect the appropriateness, quality and extent of

the peer-counselling services rendered within that particular context.

6.2.1 Peer Counsellor roles and functions :

A survey and needs analysis of the potential service-users' expectations, help-seeking behaviour and concerns are required to determine the appropriateness and goals of a peer support structure and to outline the roles and functions of the peer counsellors in specific terms. Specified roles and functions are required for the planning of appropriate, functional and continuous training content and procedures which would adequately prepare the potential peer counsellors for these specified roles and functions.

6.2.2 Peer Counsellor selection procedures :

Although the literature is inconclusive on the positive outcomes of peer counsellor selection procedures according to specified criteria, selection procedures are advised to ensure that a manageable, suitable and committed group of trainees are recruited for the training programme.

6.2.3 Peer Counsellor training - content and procedures :

One possible method for developing an appropriate and functional training programme, that was not considered in this study, is to use the content and procedures of existing training programmes as a basis from which the peer counsellor trainees can compile and structure their own standardized training programme.

The training content should reflect the roles and functions of the peer counsellors and the goals of the peer support structure. For students from educationally disadvantaged communities, it may be a priority to address the life and personal skills of the peer counsellor trainees, prior to developing

their capacity to help their peers.

Adequate training is characterized by an introductory basic skills course, followed by courses aimed at entrenching, developing and applying the helping skills to specific areas of concern and problematic peer experiences. The duration of the training programme will be affected by the training needs of the potential peer counsellors, the content and procedures decided upon and the allowance for adequate individual skills practice, application and assessment.

Experiential training strategies have been indicated in the literature, and in this study, as appropriate and functional. Ample opportunities should be created for the assessment and remediation of individual skills practice and application. Appropriate and functional assessment strategies include the following : trainer, peer and self-assessment checklists for role plays, simulations, fish bowl exercises and audiovisual-recordings of trainees' skills applications.

The training activities should be supplemented with a participants' resource file, workbook or journal, with additional written or practical assignments. This assists the trainee with reflecting on his or her skills development and the application of skills to a wider context than just the training environment.

6.2.4 Ethical and cultural considerations :

The cultural orientation of both peer counsellors and users will be considered by a syntonetic and functional peer-counselling training programme, to ensure that the peer counselling practice is aligned with the expectations, support needs, helping capacity and frame of reference of both peer counsellors and service-users.

Peer counsellors should function within the boundaries and guidance of a code of conduct, collaboratively developed in accordance with their roles and functions. Specific role and function descriptions, continuous training, support and supervision will help the peer counsellors to develop appropriate responses to issues beyond their scope of training and to follow the appropriate referral procedures.

6.2.5 Peer Counsellor supervision and support structures :

The functions of support and supervision structures are to continue with peer counsellor skills development, provide support and guidance with problematic experiences, concerns, ethical issues, appropriate referral procedures and to monitor the extent and quality of service delivery.

This area was regrettably neglected in the study. The unmanageable group size, unavailability of additional staff and resource persons and the limited opportunities for support meetings prevented the appropriate supervision of the peer counsellors and may have affected the quality and extent of the peer counsellors' services. A training, support and supervisory team, consisting of suitable institution staff and community resource persons, is advisable and will be considered for the future.

6.2.6 Programme evaluation strategies :

Formative and summative programme evaluations are essential for ongoing programme development, modification and to establish the extent and effectiveness of the programme goal-attainment.

The appropriateness and effectiveness of all six programme dimensions should be assessed.

An action research approach is suitable framework for the design and administration of the programme evaluations, as the approach facilitates interactive, contextual, participatory, collaborative

and reflective research activities that attempt to both evaluate and reform the particular programme dimension. Another advantage of action research is that the research activities consult with, and are carried out by, the persons best suited to implement, change and benefit from the particular peer-counselling support practice.

The role of the specific contextual features of the institution cannot be overemphasized in the planning, implementation and management of a functional and syntonetic peer support structure. Recognition of both user and peer counsellor needs and concerns and the contextual challenges will ensure that the peer support structure is appropriate, functional and effective in terms of addressing these needs and concerns.

Some of these guidelines mentioned under the above dimensions, were also indicated by Carr, Yanishewski and De Rosenroll (1989), Henriksen (1991), Foster-Harrison (1995), Lewis and Lewis (1996) and Sharp (1996), as important considerations for the implementation of an effective and functional peer-counselling support structure.

6.3 Strengths and limitations of the research project :

The research project showed to be a meaningful exercise in terms of collecting relevant and useful information on :

- (a) the need for, and appropriateness of a peer counselling support structure at the College,
- (b) the roles and functions of peer counsellors in providing appropriate and adequate pastoral care,
- (c) the nature and extent of training required for an effective and functional peer counselling support structure,

(d) implementation guidelines for future peer counselling training programmes in terms of peer counsellor selection, -support and supervision and programme evaluations.

A further strength of the study was the action research approach that facilitated the cost- and time-effective information gathering processes from multiple sources. The main contribution of the action research approach was in structuring the reflective, collaborative, participatory and contextual understanding, evaluation and re-formation of the College peer-counselling support structure.

Although relevant and useful information was collected, the research project overlooked an investigation of the following :

- (a) the perspectives and opinions of service-users with a user-questionnaire,
- (b) the impact of the peer counselling support structure on the residential and learning environment with a post-training and implementation survey,
- (c) the actual impact of the training programme on the peer counsellor trainees' helping skills and personal development with a pre- and post- training assessment strategy, for example a standardized questionnaire, recorded or observed role play performances.

These areas could be considered for future research projects or be included in future programme evaluation strategies.

Care was taken with the design of the questionnaires and the preparation of the students conducting the survey, to limit the possibility of the students' English language proficiency and translations interfering with the interpretation of the questions and the documentation of the responses.

In addition to the possible language interferences, biased responses to the survey and field work assignment questionnaires may have occurred, due to the research participants' vested interest in

promoting a peer-counselling support structure or exaggerating their peer-counselling performance.

These negative interferences may have been contained by using :

- (a) bilingual questionnaires,
- (b) a random selection of survey respondents,
- (c) supervised survey interviews,
- (d) user feedback from questionnaires or interviews with the researcher.

A contextual drawback, which affected the overall validity of the research project, was the period during which no contact could be maintained with the peer counsellors due to mass action, the semester break and delayed examinations, and the subsequent short, four month period during which the peer counsellors applied their skills and documented their counselling experiences.

This impeded the observation, supervision and assessment of the peer counsellors' performance and assessment of the impact of the peer-counselling structure on the well-being of the student community.

6.4 Indications for future research :

The study did not establish explicit guidelines for the selection and training dimensions for effective and functional peer counselling programme implementation. These issues may be addressed through further research projects at the College or research projects at other institutions or organizations where a peer counselling support structure have been implemented or is being considered.

A differential study is required to assess the relative effectiveness and impact of the different training approaches, models and procedures. Another differential study can explore the effectiveness of different selection criteria and procedures in identifying suitable and competent peer counsellors.

In terms of the peer counselling mode of support, further research is required to establish the :

(a) nature and extent of service use over time, user profiles and which user concerns are more, or less, responsive to peer counselling,

(b) long term effect or impact of the peer counselling support structure on the learning environment,

(c) specific qualities of the peer counselling relationship that is perceived as helpful and facilitate change and appropriate problem management.

A comparison between the counselling mode preferences of more experienced users and those users with limited counselling choices, may give an indication as to the actual acceptability and preferability of peer counselling as a counselling mode, compared to other counselling modes.

Some of the above mentioned areas for further research have also been identified by De Rosenroll (1989) and Carr, Yanishewski and De Rosenroll (1989).

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SURVEY ON PEER COUNSELLING
RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT OF THE GUIDANCE (DESP II) STUDENTS

| | | | |
|-----|--------|---------|----------|
| No. | NAME : | CLASS : | CREDIT : |
|-----|--------|---------|----------|

RESPONDENT :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | F | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1. WHICH OF THE TWO COUNSELLORS WOULD YOU PREFER TO HAVE ACCESS TO ?

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| PEER COUNSELLOR | STUDENT COUNSELLOR |
|-----------------|--------------------|

WHY ?

2. WHICH OF THE TWO COUNSELLORS WOULD YOU BE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH ?

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| PEER COUNSELLOR | STUDENT COUNSELLOR |
|-----------------|--------------------|

WHY ?

3. WHICH OF THE TWO COUNSELLORS DO YOU THINK WOULD BE MORE FUNCTIONAL IN TERMS OF YOUR NEEDS ?

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| PEER COUNSELLOR | STUDENT COUNSELLOR |
|-----------------|--------------------|

WHY ?

4. WOULD YOU EVER SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM A PEER COUNSELLOR ? Y / N

WHY NOT ?

5. WHOM (DO YOU / WOULD YOU) CONFIDE IN WHEN ENCOUNTERING PROBLEMS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS :

| AREA: | STAFF MEMBER | PARENTS | OTHER RELATIVES | FRIEND | BOY/GIRLFRIEND HUSBAND/WIFE | MINISTER | PEER COUNSELLOR | OTHER : (SPECIFY) |
|---------------|--------------|---------|-----------------|--------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|
| PERSONAL | | | | | | | | |
| INTERPERSONAL | | | | | | | | |
| ACADEMIC | | | | | | | | |

6. WHO DO YOU THINK STUDENTS GENERALLY CONFIDE IN WHEN FACED WITH A STRESSFUL SITUATION ?

7. WHICH SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD A SUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE PEER COUNSELLOR HAVE ?

8. WHAT KIND OF TRAINING IS NECESSARY BEFORE A STUDENT CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE PEER COUNSELLOR ?

9. WHICH IMPORTANT GUIDELINES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS TO ENSURE AN EFFECTIVE AND FUNCTIONAL PEER COUNSELLING SYSTEM AT THE COLLEGE ?

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| SELECTION OF PEER COUNSELLORS | |
| ACCESS TO PEER COUNSELLORS | |
| SUPPORT TO PEER COUNSELLORS | |
| CODE OF CONDUCT | |
| OTHER : | |

Peer Counselling Training Programme

| Date : | Time : | Theme : | Sub-topics : |
|--------|--------|--------------------------------------|--|
| | | Introduction : | Ice-breakers Self and group awareness Trust building Personal baggage Counsellor profile Counselling theory The counselling (helping) relationship Ethical and cultural issues Needs analysis |
| | | Counselling Skills : (Non-verbal) | Body language Observing Active listening Attending Frame of reference Silence Skills practice |
| | | Counselling Skills : (Verbal) | Communicating : sincerity, acceptance, regard and understanding Identifying feelings Empathic responding Paraphrasing, summary and reflection Probing and questioning Encouragers Skills practice |
| | | The Counselling Process | Experiential learning Facilitating change Problem Management Model Skills practice |
| | | Counselling Challenges : | Stress management Conflict management Negotiation and mediation Crisis intervention Support networking |

College of Education : Guidance Department

Peer Counselling Training Programme
1998

Venue : Guidance Classroom

| S : | Date : | Time : | Theme : | Topics & Skills : |
|-----|--------|----------------------|--|---|
| 1 | 18/5 | 18h00 to 20h00 | Introduction : establishing an awareness & understanding of peer counselling | (1) group dynamics & contracts (2) peer counselling (3) you - the peer counsellor (4) counselling theory |
| 2 | 19/5 | 18h00 to 20h00 | Counselling Skills : non-verbal | (1) the counselling relationship (2) physical & psychological attending : listening, observing, silences, posture, minimal encouragers, body language, frame of reference |
| 3 | 20/5 | 18h00 to 20h00 | Counselling Skills : verbal | (1) communicating sincerity, acceptance, regard & empathy (2) questioning, encouraging, responding, probing, reflecting, paraphrasing & summarizing |
| 4 | 21/5 | 18h00 to 20h00 | A Problem Management Model | (1) problem management (2) ethical & cultural issues, confidentiality (3) consolidation of sessions 1, 2 & 3 |
| 5 | 22/5 | 07h30 to 09h30 | Counselling Challenges | (1) crisis management (2) support networking (3) needs analysis |

Field Work Assignment :

Please complete a Data Summary Form for each counselling session that you undertake this year.
Please submit your forms by 09-10-98.

Peer Counselling Training programme

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Contract of Commitment |
|-------------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Ground Rules : | |
| | |
| 2. Goals : | |
| | |
| 3. Interaction : | |
| | |
| 4. Confrontation : | |
| | |
| 5. Confidentiality : | |
| | |
| 6. Initiative : | |
| | |
| 7. Responsibilities : | |
| | |
| 8. Additional : | |
| | |

I, _____ hereby accept the contents of this contract and commit myself to fulfilling the terms thereof to the best of my abilities :

Signed : _____ Date : _____

Witness : _____ Date : _____

Your certificate for successful completion of the
Peer Counselling Training Programme

will only be awarded to you if you
have fulfilled all of the following requirements :

100% training attendance
submission of the field work assignment
attendance at support meetings

Peer Counsellor : _____

Signature : _____

Peer Counselling Training Programme

Declaration
of
Confidentiality

I _____

undertake to at all times, in my role as a peer counsellor,
maintain confidentiality.

I will not divulge any information revealed to me by any person(s),
without their explicit, prior consent.

I undertake to respect the integrity and autonomy of
the person(s) at all times.

Signed : _____ Date : _____

PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING PROGRAMME

5(a)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|-----------|---|------------|----------------|-------------|
| | M | F | 1 | 2 | 3 | AGE : | |
| FIELD OF STUDY : | MATH | NATURAL SCIENCES | LANGUAGES | COMMERCE | TECHNOLOGY | HUMAN SCIENCES | ANCILLARY : |
| AREA WHERE YOU HAD MOST OF YOUR SCHOOLING : | RURAL | TOWN | CITY | GUIDANCE TEACHER AND/OR SCHOOL COUNSELLOR | | YES | NO |

PLEASE GIVE YOUR HONEST RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING :

1. FORMAL AND INFORMAL COUNSELLING EXPERIENCES :

(A) RECEIVED FROM :

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------|-------------|-------------------------|------|---------|
| TEACHER | PARENTS | OTHER RELATIVE | CHURCH MEMBER | HEALTH WORKER | FRIEND | E.C.E STAFF | B/G-FRIEND HUSBAND/WIFE | PEER | OTHER : |
|---------|---------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------|-------------|-------------------------|------|---------|

(B) GIVEN TO :

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|---------|----------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------|------|---------|
| PUPIL | PARENTS | OTHER RELATIVE | CHURCH MEMBER | FRIEND | B/G-FRIEND HUSBAND/WIFE | PEER | OTHER : |
|-------|---------|----------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------|------|---------|

(C) WHO WOULD YOU PREFER TO CONFIDE IN WHEN ENCOUNTERING PROBLEMS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS :

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|--------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|---------|
| AREA : | E.C.E STAFF | PARENTS | OTHER RELATIVES | FRIEND | B/G-FRIEND HUSBAND/WIFE | MINISTER | PEER COUNSELLOR | OTHER : |
| PERSONAL | | | | | | | | |
| INTERPERSONAL | | | | | | | | |
| ACADEMIC | | | | | | | | |

2. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR YOUR ENROLLMENT IN THE PC TRAINING PROGRAMME ?

3. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO GAIN FROM THE PC TRAINING PROGRAMME ?

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| PERSONALLY : | SOCIALLY : | PROFESSIONALLY : |
| | | |

4. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHAT YOU THINK THE FUNCTIONS OF A PEER COUNSELLOR WOULD BE AT THE COLLEGE.

5. WHICH PERSONAL QUALITIES SHOULD AN EFFECTIVE PEER COUNSELLOR HAVE ?

6. WHICH SKILLS SHOULD AN EFFECTIVE PEER COUNSELLOR HAVE ?

7. WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A PEER COUNSELLOR ?

PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING PROGRAMME

5(b)

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------|------------------|-----------|----------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| | M | F | 1 | 2 | 3 | AGE : | |
| FIELD OF STUDY : | MATH | NATURAL SCIENCES | LANGUAGES | COMMERCE | TECHNOLOGY | HUMAN SCIENCES | ANCILLARY : |

PLEASE GIVE YOUR HONEST RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING :

1. HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN ANY PEER COUNSELLING SESSIONS SINCE YOUR TRAINING ? Y / N
2. DO YOU THINK A PEER COUNSELLING SYSTEM WILL BE FUNCTIONAL AT E.C.E ? Y / N (PLEASE MOTIVATE)

3. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR POTENTIAL FUNCTIONS AS A PEER COUNSELLOR AT E.C.E :

4. GIVE YOUR IDEAS ON HOW AN EFFECTIVE PEER COUNSELLING SYSTEM AT E.C.E SHOULD BE MANAGED :

5. WHAT DID YOU GAIN THROUGH YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE PC TRAINING PROGRAMME ?

| | | |
|------------|----------|----------------|
| PERSONALLY | SOCIALLY | PROFESSIONALLY |
| | | |

6. WHAT KIND OF FOLLOW-UP TRAINING AND/OR SUPPORT WOULD YOU NEED TO SUSTAIN YOUR PEER COUNSELLING ROLE AT E.C.E ?

EVALUATION FORM

PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING PROGRAMME : SESSION : 1 / 2 / 3 / 4

6(a)

Please give your honest and immediate response to the following questions !

| 1. SCORE THE SESSION ON THE FOLLOWING DIMENSIONS : | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | COMMENTS : |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| (A) GROUP DYNAMICS | | | | | | |
| (B) RELEVANCE OF THE INFORMATION | | | | | | |
| (C) SKILLS DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | |
| (D) CONTEXTUAL SYNTHESIS | | | | | | |
| (E) FACILITATION | | | | | | |
| (F) NEEDS FULFILMENT | | | | | | |

2. EVALUATION OF THE SESSION :

- (A) THE MOST ENJOYABLE WAS _____
- (B) THE LEAST ENJOYABLE WAS _____
- (C) I NEED MORE INFORMATION ON _____
- (D) I NEED MORE PRACTICE IN _____
- (E) I BENEFITTED MOST FROM _____
- (F) I WAS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH _____
- (G) WHAT I FOUND MOST INTERESTING WAS _____
- (H) WHAT I FOUND LEAST INTERESTING WAS _____
- (I) THE PART THAT APPLIES TO THE COUNSELLING CONTEXT AT E.C.E IS _____
- (J) THE PART THAT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE COUNSELLING CONTEXT AT E.C.E IS _____
- (K) THE PART THAT WILL HELP ME IN MY FUTURE COUNSELLING ROLE IS _____
- (L) THE PART THAT WILL NOT HELP ME IN MY FUTURE COUNSELLING ROLE IS _____

3. WHICH TOPIC(S) WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPLORE IN THE FOLLOWING SESSION ?

EVALUATION FORM

PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING PROGRAMME : SESSION : 5

6(b)

Please give your honest and immediate response to the following questions !

| 1. SCORE THE SESSION ON THE FOLLOWING DIMENSIONS : | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | COMMENTS : |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| (A) GROUP DYNAMICS | | | | | | |
| (B) RELEVANCE OF THE INFORMATION | | | | | | |
| (C) SKILLS DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | |
| (D) CONTEXTUAL SYNTHESIS | | | | | | |
| (E) FACILITATION | | | | | | |
| (F) NEEDS FULFILMENT | | | | | | |

2. EVALUATION OF THE SESSION :

- (A) THE MOST ENJOYABLE WAS _____
- (B) THE LEAST ENJOYABLE WAS _____
- (C) I NEED MORE INFORMATION ON _____
- (D) I NEED MORE PRACTICE IN _____
- (E) I BENEFITTED MOST FROM _____
- (F) I WAS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH _____
- (G) WHAT I FOUND MOST INTERESTING WAS _____
- (H) WHAT I FOUND LEAST INTERESTING WAS _____
- (I) THE PART THAT APPLIES TO THE COUNSELLING CONTEXT AT E.C.E IS _____
- (J) THE PART THAT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE COUNSELLING CONTEXT AT E.C.E IS _____
- (K) THE PART THAT WILL HELP ME IN MY FUTURE COUNSELLING ROLE IS _____
- (L) THE PART THAT WILL NOT HELP ME IN MY FUTURE COUNSELLING ROLE IS _____

3. WHICH TOPIC(S) AND/OR SKILLS WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPLORE IN AN ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAMME AND/OR SUPPORT MEETINGS ?

4. HAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE TRAINING PROGRAMME FACILITATED ANY CHANGES IN YOUR ATTITUDES ? (ELABOR

5. WHICH SKILLS HAVE YOU ACQUIRED THROUGH YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE TRAINING PROGRAMME ?

6. DO YOU THINK THAT THE TRAINING PROGRAMME HAS SUFFICIENTLY PREPARED YOU TO BEGIN WITH PEER COUNSELL AT E.C.E ? How so ? _____

7. SUPPORT MEETINGS AND/OR FOLLOW-UP SESSIONS WILL BE ARRANGED IN FUTURE :

How SHOULD IT BE ORGANIZED ? _____

WHAT SHOULD THE CONTENT BE ? _____

8. IF YOU HAD TO FACILITATE A SIMILAR PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING PROGRAMME, WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IN TERMS OF THE :

(A) ORGANIZATION :

(B) FACILITATION :

(C) CONTENT :

(D) SKILLS :

(E) OTHER :

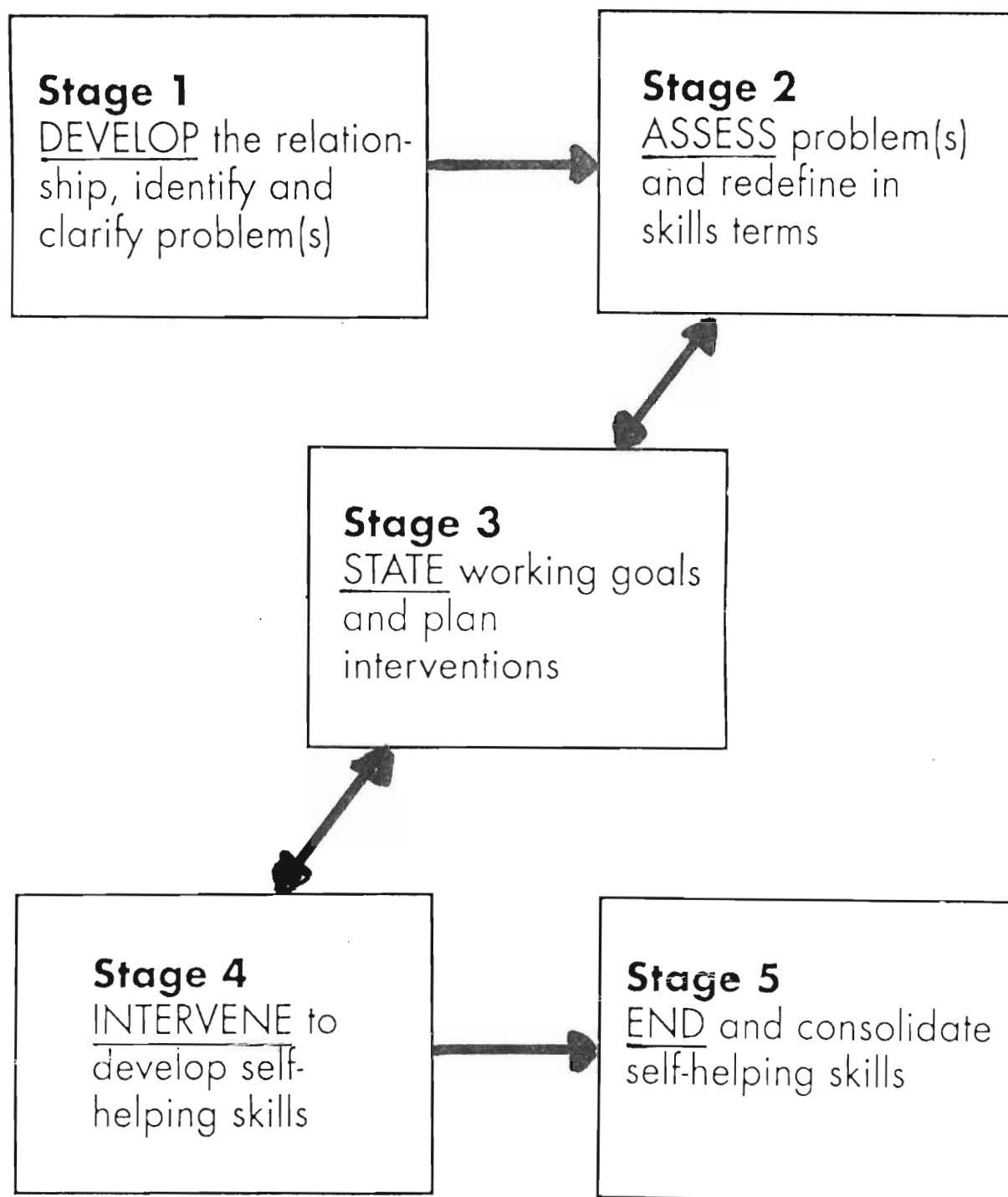
Peer Counselling Training Programme

Fish Bowl Exercise : Observer's Check List

| Foci : | Score : | | | | | Comments : |
|--|---------|---|---|---|---|------------|
| establishing the counselling relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| observing & listening | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| verbal & non-verbal display of : understanding sincerity acceptance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| verbal skills : questioning & probing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| verbal skills : paraphrasing reflecting summarizing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| attending (v & nv) : physical psychological feedback | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| problem management setting goals use strengths develop life skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| terminating the counselling relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING PROGRAMME

DASIE : The 5-stage life skills helping model for problem management



Nelson-Jones, R. (1993). *Practical counselling and helping skills* (3rd ed.). London : Cassell.

College of Education
Peer Counselling Training Programme

Dear participants,

The following material is available for you on the reserve rack (ask at the counter) in the library :

(1) Folder A : APEK Professional Development - Basic Counselling Skills, M. Ferguson & E. Maulson.

(2) Folder B : LIFE LINE, Natal Coastal Region - Introduction to Counselling.

Library Books :

(3) The Teacher and Counselling, D. Hamblin.

(4) Practical Counselling and Helping Skills, R. Nelson-Jones.

(5) Counselling - A Skills Approach, E. A. Munro, R. J. Manthei & J. J. Small

(6) Counselling Young People, H. Gillis.

Remember to fill in the registration form at the counter for using the material.

Pay specific attention to the exercises contained in the material as these will help you with the role-play exercises in our training sessions.

Read and practice with a peer in your group - this is another opportunity for you to developing your counselling skills !

Please make use of the Peer Counselling **SUGGESTION BOX** in my classroom for your comments !



DATA SUMMARY FORM
PEER COUNSELLING TRAINING PROGRAMME
FIELD WORK ASSIGNMENT

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | F | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

DATE : _____ NAME : _____ CLASS : _____

1. I COUNSELLED A STUDENT :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | F | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

2. IN RESPECT OF :

| | | | |
|----------|------------------|--------------|--------|
| FINANCE | RESIDENTIAL | MANAGEMENT | FAMILY |
| SOCIAL | EMOTIONAL | RELATIONSHIP | HEALTH |
| ACADEMIC | OTHER STRESSOR : | | |

3. I AM OF THE OPINION THAT THE PEER COUNSELLING WAS :

(A) HELPFUL, BECAUSE :

(B) NOT HELPFUL, BECAUSE :

4. I REFERRED HIM/HER TO :

FOR :

5. HOW COULD THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED IN (2) BE MANAGED BY :

PEER COUNSELLING ?

LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES ?

6. I AM OF THE OPINION THAT THE REASON(S) WHY :

(A) THIS STUDENT MADE USE OF PEER COUNSELLING IS :

(B) OTHER STUDENTS WITH SIMILAR PROBLEMS DO NOT MAKE USE OF PEER COUNSELLING IS :