

# **A Thematic Analysis of Young People's Experience of Counselling in Five Secondary Schools in the UK**

Rosemarie Lynass\*, Olga Pykhtina & Mick Cooper

Author Posting. (c) 'British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy', 2011. This is the author's version of the work. It is posted here by permission of 'British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy ' for personal use, not for redistribution.

The definitive version was published in *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, May, 2011.

doi:10.1080/14733145.2011.580853

(<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14733145.2011.580853>)

## **Abstract**

*Aim:* To investigate young people's views on the effects of school-based counselling, and what they found helpful and unhelpful. *Method:* Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted and thematically analysed. *Findings:* Participants expressed predominantly positive views of school-based counselling with changes in three main domains: *emotional, interpersonal* and *behavioural*. Participants viewed these changes as having had an important effect on their lives. The most commonly cited helpful aspects of counselling were related to talking or getting things out, and counsellor qualities. *Conclusions:* School-based counselling is viewed positively by those who have experienced it, and appears to be an appropriate and valuable intervention for young people.

**Key Words: Counselling in Schools, Young People, Therapeutic Change, Clients' Experiences, Thematic Analysis, Qualitative**

School-based counselling has been the focus of increasing research in recent years. Cooper's (2009) recent meta-analysis showed that it is associated with considerable improvements in

psychological wellbeing in young people, with approximately 50% of clients showing clinical improvement following counselling, and some evidence of sustained effects at three month follow-up (Fox and Butler, 2003).

Studies have also used self-report measures to gauge clients' perceptions of how much they have benefited from counselling. These client evaluations have shown counselling in a very positive light. When completing post-counselling questionnaires, the majority of clients consistently rated counselling as being "helpful" or "very helpful" (Loynd, 2002; Cooper, 2006b), or as helping them "a lot" or "quite a lot" (Sherry, 1999; Cooper, 2004; Cooper 2006a). Additionally, when interviewed, the majority of clients reported that counselling had been helpful and described their experiences in a predominantly positive way (Fox & Butler, 2003; Cooper, 2004 & Cooper, 2006a). Only a very small minority of clients described counselling as 'unhelpful'. Teachers and pastoral support staff have also indicated a belief in the helpfulness of school counselling services (Cooper, 2009, Cooper, 2004; Cooper, 2006a; Loynd, 2002).

When asked about the helpful aspects of counselling, clients have consistently pointed to the opportunity to talk and be listened to (Sherry, 1999; Fox & Butler, 2003; Cooper, 2004; Cooper, 2006a; Cooper, 2006b). Other helpful elements include confidentiality, getting things off your chest (Sherry, 1999; Cooper 2004; Cooper, 2006a; Cooper, 2006b; Fox & Butler, 2003), strategies and techniques used by the counsellor (Bondi et al, 2006) and being given guidance and/or advice (Cooper, 2004; Bondi et al, 2006). Personal qualities of the counsellor have also been highlighted as important (Bondi et al, 2006), as well as problem-solving, insight, independence and being understood and accepted (Cooper, 2009). With respect to unhelpful aspects of counselling, few common themes have emerged. The most notable criticisms relate to concerns about confidentiality (Sherry, 1999; Cooper 2004; Fox & Butler, 2003), and the non-directive nature of the counselling (Cooper, 2004, 2009).

Fewer studies have asked young people directly about what changed for them after counselling. Available research suggests that schools counselling has the greatest effect on emotional and interpersonal wellbeing, and less on behavioural aspects of the clients' wellbeing (Cooper, 2006a). However, some research does indicate that the majority of clients identified behavioural changes such as being more assertive, asking for help, or walking away from confrontation (Cooper, 2004). Other areas of improvement include increased acceptance, acknowledging personal needs, managing/expressing feelings more constructively, gaining perspective, feeling more relaxed (Bondi et al, 2006), feeling less "burdened", and having greater insight and increased self-confidence (Cooper, 2004). Overall, Cooper (2009) pointed to two particular domains: friendships and home life, where improvements appear to have their greatest affect. However, evidence about this is somewhat varied with some studies showing only a marginal difference between the impact of counselling on home and school environments (Sherry, 1999, Cooper 2004). There is certainly evidence that changes have an important affect in the classroom environment, (Cooper, 2006a, Bondi et al, 2006).

The present study investigated further the views of young people on what they found helpful and unhelpful about the counselling they received, as well as adding to limited literature on what they felt had changed for them since having counselling. This study formed part of a larger, pilot randomised controlled trial of school-based therapeutic counselling (Cooper, Rowland, McArthur, Pattison, Cromarty and Richards, 2010). In contrast to most previous studies, it used a semi-structured, rather than unstructured (e.g., Cooper, 2004) interview format. It was also the first study to use a standardised interview protocol, based on Elliott's (1996) Client Change Interview. Importantly, the incorporation of this study within an experimental trial meant that all interviewees had received a similar counselling

intervention; and that interviewees were representative of *all* young people receiving counselling, rather than a self- or teacher-selected sample.

## **Method**

### *Design*

This study adopted a pluralistic method; quantitative data are presented alongside qualitative data to provide as full a picture of the clients' experience as possible. The fundamental aim of the study was to gain an understanding of young people's experience of counselling. The research took the form of a semi-structured interview using a standardised interview protocol.

### *Participants*

Eleven participants who were in the counselling condition of a randomised trial of school-based humanistic counselling (Cooper, Rowland, McArthur, Pattison, Cromarty & Richards, 2010) were interviewed. The participants were aged 13-15. Three were male and eight were female. The number of counselling sessions received ranged from two to six (one young person had two sessions, one had three sessions, one had four sessions, three had five sessions, and five had the maximum six sessions). The sample size was determined by the sample available in the larger study; however, it was also considered that saturation point had been reached in the final interviews.

### *Data Collection*

This study used a modified version of Elliott's (1996) Client Change Interview which was adapted for use with young people (Supplementary Information – available online). Elliott's semi-structured interview schedule has been designed for use at the end of therapy as a tool to help explore clients' experience of counselling and, in particular, what has changed for the client since beginning therapy and what aspects of counselling they found particularly helpful or unhelpful. The semi-structured nature of the Client Change Interview enabled the researcher to focus on relevant areas of client experience while, at the same time, allowing enough flexibility for the research to respond to clients' comments and explore aspects of clients' experience as fully as possible.

The main questions in the interview were as follows:

- What changes, if any, have you noticed in yourself since your counselling started?
  
- Has anything changed for the better for you since your counselling started?
  
- Has anything changed for the worse for you since your counselling started?
  
- Is there anything that you wanted to change that hasn't since your counselling started?
  
- How important or significant to you personally do you think that these changes have been? Rating Scale
  
- For each change, please rate how likely you think it would have been without counselling? Rating Scale

- In what ways have these changes been significant in your life?
  
- In general, what do you think has caused the various changes you described? In other words, what do you think might have brought them about?
  
- Can you sum up what has been helpful about your counselling so far? Please give examples
  
- What kinds of things about the counselling have been unhelpful, negative or disappointing for you?
  
- Were there things in the counselling which were difficult but still OK or perhaps helpful? What were they?
  
- Has anything been missing from your counselling?
  
- Do you have any suggestions for us, regarding the research or the counselling?

### *Procedure*

The research was carried out in five secondary schools, three in Glasgow, Scotland and two in County Durham, England. The intervention used for the research was standardised humanistic counselling, where counselling input was required to meet specific humanistic/person-centred competencies (see Cooper, Rowland, McArthur et al, 2010). End of counselling interviews were conducted by three researchers. The interviews were semi-

structured and, as such, interviews were carried out in an in-depth, qualitative manner. The interviews were recorded for later transcription by the researcher.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University Ethics Committee of the University of Strathclyde, and informed consent was obtained from all participating young people. Researchers involved in the study followed standardised guidelines on dealing with risk and worked within child protection procedures set out by participating schools.

### *Analysis*

The interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (see Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was chosen because it was seen as a suitable method of disseminating what was said in the interviews; identifying patterns and offering some interpretation of the data. A data-driven approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was adopted for interpretation of the data as this was an exploratory study that did not intend to fit with any specific theories but instead aimed to explore the participants' experience as it presented. Following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), the interview data were read and re-read in order to provide the principal researcher with a strong sense of the content of the interviews. Interviews were then coded and themes were identified. Analysis was conducted by the first author and later audited by the paper's second author. Statistical information relating to themes (i.e. frequencies) was also recorded and is presented. Certain interview questions asked participants to rate their experiences or highlight specific changes that might have occurred, and this quantitative data has been collated and included in the *Findings* section.

One participant was mistakenly given the interview for waiting list participants and therefore not directly asked about their experience of counselling. This was as a result of the interviewer being blind to the participant condition and therefore relying on the participants' self-reported condition. However, the waiting list interview consists of mostly the same questions as the Client Change Interview and, as the interview is semi-structured, the client provided significant relevant information. Therefore, this interview was included in the analysis, but some specific questions should be considered in relation to a possible ten responses.

### **Reflexive statement**

Rosemarie Lynass, the lead researcher and one of the interviewers for this study, is an integrative counsellor who had not worked therapeutically with young people at the time of carrying out this research but has since begun working with young people. Olga Pykhtina, the second interviewer, has no formal involvement in the counselling field. Mick Cooper has been an active researcher and advocate of school-based counselling for several years, and is trained in person-centred and existential approaches to therapy, though he has recently been involved in the development of a 'pluralistic' approach to therapy (Cooper and McLeod, 2011).

### **Findings**

Table 1 lists all changes identified by at least one participant when asked what had changed for them, as well as how many participants mentioned each of these changes. Clients identified a wide range of changes since counselling. However, it should be noted that most clients referred to further changes during the interview and these have been included in the thematic analysis. The most frequently occurring changes included feeling more confident,



talking about things more easily, other people noticing changes, improved relationships with family and friends, thinking differently and feeling happier.

In terms of how important these changes were perceived to be, all of the changes were seen as being at least 'Slightly Important', with most being rated as 'Very Important' or 'Extremely Important'. Notably, improved family relationships, improved relationships with friends, being able to talk about things more easily and having increased confidence were generally rated highly, with the exception of one client who rated improved relationships as only slightly important.

Table 2 shows how likely each client thought it would have been for each of their identified changes to occur if they had not had counselling. Ten of the eleven participants were asked this question. None of the clients felt that any change mentioned was very likely to have occurred without counselling. Only three of the changes mentioned individually were seen as likely to have occurred without counselling. The vast majority (76%) of the changes were seen as slightly unlikely or very unlikely to have occurred without counselling.

Themes emerging from the analysis of the interviews are summarised in Table 3 and in Figure 1, the following is a discussion of the major themes:

### ***Counselling experienced as positive***

Statements directly indicating that counselling was experienced as good or helpful were common:

*"I thought it was good. Like I feel I've benefitted from it a lot"* (Client 3)

*“It’s been really helpful. I think if I never like pushed myself to go to counselling I don’t think that I would be here right now to be quite honest” (Client 7)*

### ***Helpful aspects of counselling***

The most commonly cited helpful aspects of counselling, with more than half of those questioned cited them (6+), were talking or getting things out, counsellor qualities, being able to talk about things that they felt unable to talk to family/friends about, having other help alongside counselling, feeling listened to/understood and confidentiality/privacy.

***Talking or “getting things out”*** was widely cited as being a helpful aspect of counselling. A few of the participants used illustrative examples to describe what it felt like to talk about their issues in counselling. One participant compared their experience to a pile of books saying:

*“... you pile them up and pile them up. That’s what it was like with all my problems, dealing with them one bit at a time, but like talking to the counsellor, I was able to take one off at a time”.* (Client 5)

Another participant said

*“It’s like something’s just burst. You know how you get people who are really angry and then one day it’s going to burst? But it’s good to like get stuff out, so I wouldn’t burst”* (Client 2)

***Counsellors’ personal qualities*** were often described about how they helped to put clients at ease,

*“It’s not as if she made me feel uncomfortable or as though I didn’t want to be there .. I liked how she spoke to me and stuff and how she acted”.* (Client 4)

Many participants talked about how in counselling they ***can talk about things that they can’t talk to family/friends about.*** This usually involved the participant not wanting to upset friends or family:

*“I had told my friends about things before but like they didn’t, I felt I was kinda bringing them down when I was saying it so I tried not to tell them”* (Client 6)

It was also clear that for most participants ***other people helped alongside counselling:***

*“Being able to talk to my Mum, that’s like, that’s had a big effect because before I never thought that I could talk to her about that kind of stuff”* (Client 4)

*“I think like cause some of my friends knew I was going to it, like they didn’t know why, they were like ‘oh we’re here for you’ ... that kind of helped me focus on changing things”* (Client 6)

Within counselling clients particularly valued ***feeling listened to and understood:***

*“And like they know how you feel and that and so it makes you feel like quite good and like they’re listening to you”* (Client 10) *“It was like they spoke to me as if they knew what was going on inside my head. So I felt more happy about that because then*

*I felt that someone understood what was happening and what was wrong with me”*

(Client 3)

The fact that counselling was seen as ***confidential and private*** was also valued:

*“Cause like in here I know like it would just be between me and the person”.* (Client 11)

Other helpful aspects mentioned were trusting the counsellor; counsellor feedback, looking at ways to change; the counselling room and atmosphere, things about self that helped make use of counselling & being treated as an equal/not being told what to do.

### ***Positive Changes***

Participants identified a number of positive changes experienced since starting counselling. The most commonly cited changes, for more than half of clients (6+), being seen differently by others; talking more easily; improvements in school; feeling more confident; feeling happier; being able to stand up for yourself more; changes in thinking and improved friendships. Other frequently cited changes, for five participants, were changes in attitude, improved family relationships and socialising more. Improved behaviour was mentioned by four participants.

Importantly clients reported ***being seen differently by others***:

*“Like all my family’s noticed and a couple of my friends have noticed as well.”*

(Client 7)

The most commonly identified change was that clients felt *they were talking about their feelings more easily* now:

*“I’ve learned how to sit and talk to someone not, like properly. It just helps quite a lot being able to sit and talk to people now and I know now that I can talk to my Mum if I ever need to”* (Client 7)

*Improvements in school (attendance, performance or enjoyment)* were also commonly cited:

*“I’m glad that I’ve been in school more cause I’ve been doing so much better in school”* (Client 3); *“I used to hate coming to school but now I’m alright with it”*

Participants also reported feeling *more confident*:

*“I probably feel more confident in myself as well”* (Client 4)

Feeling generally *happier* was usually stated in simple terms such as:

*“I was unhappy then and like I’m happy now”* (Client 9) or *“I’ve been feeling happier. I’ve not been feeling as grumpy which has been a big influence in my day to day life”* (Client 11)

Interestingly, one theme that emerged was participants describing themselves as *being stronger and standing up for themselves more*:

*“Since I’ve had counselling I’ve been able to stand up for myself. I’m not going to let anyone push me around anymore”* (Client 5)

Participants also talked about noticing ***changes in their attitude*** and in their ***thinking***:

*“I’m not so negative at school and I can come home and be positive”* (Client 8);

*“Seeing that not everything’s my fault. Like every time I get into trouble it’s not always going to be my fault”* (Client 5)

Two important areas of ***improvements*** were ***in relationships with friends and with family***:

*“I’ve got on a lot better with my friends as well”* (Client 4)

*“Me and my Mum we’ve got a really good bond now and we never used to really but now like we’re really close and that because, I don’t know, I’ve learned how to like sit and talk to someone ... [if] it wasn’t for counselling I don’t think that we would be talking really because like we’ve been through a rough patch”* (Client 7)

### ***“Difficult but Okay”***

Within the analysis, two aspects of the counselling were identified as being challenging, but ultimately of positive benefit. First, ***Talking about personal things***:

*“There was like something that I’d never really told anyone but I told her all about it and that was like really hard for me...but once I did I felt like loads better about myself” (Client 7)*

Participants also spoke about how it ***felt strange or unusual*** being in counselling at first but that this did get better:

*“Participant: Just the first time because like I didn’t really know what to say and that but then after about ten minutes I was just talking away and that*

*Interviewer: Uhuh, so that first session, just getting started was quite difficult*

*Participant: Uhuh, because I’ve never like talked to somebody that’s like not related to me or a friend or something” (Client 1)*

### ***Problematic Aspects of Counselling***

Four participants felt that there were ***things that didn’t change although they wanted them to*** in counselling:

*“Like in school I never used to be able to concentrate and I still can’t” (Client 5)*

Notably these clients had experienced other positive changes.

When asked what could be improved, three of the clients discussed ***wanting more sessions or longer sessions*** and two clients were concerned about ***missing lessons***.

Two of the participants reported *feeling that little had changed* for them. Interestingly each of these participants did go on to discuss aspects of their life that had changed, as well as aspects about counselling that they found helpful. However it was clear that their perception was that counselling had not had a great effect on their life. When asked if anything had changed for them the first participant said,

*“No really, it’s just the same”* (Client 1)

and the second participant said

*“Well I don’t, I don’t really feel like that much different”* (Client 10).

One of these participants only attended two counselling sessions and talked about how counselling, “just felt a bit weird” and that they “just felt a bit uncomfortable when they were talking” (Client 10). This client did not report any adverse effects of counselling but they did say that they had expected counselling to be “a bit more helpful”. The second client also did not report any adverse effects of counselling and talked about how they may not have been ready for things to change in their life at this stage because of their personal circumstances.

Two clients also discussed feeling that there was *not enough direction or advice in the counselling*.

*“It was like, I thought she would ask me questions but I had to like keep talking. Like talk all the time ....because I thought that like counselling they ask you questions and that, and you answer them”* (Client 1)



*“A bit more support and that, and like trying to, cause they were just like agreeing and that and not really like telling me that much” (Client 10 )*

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that the young people who received counselling expressed largely positive views about it. Even those who felt that little had changed for them described counselling in positive terms. This reflects previous findings where the majority of clients have reported counselling as helpful and generally positive (Sherry, 1999; Loynd, 2002; Fox & Butler, 2003; Cooper, 2004; Bondi et al, 2006; Cooper, 2006a & Cooper, 2009).

The most commonly cited changes were being seen differently by others; talking more easily; improvements at school; feeling more confident; feeling happier; being able to stand up for themselves more; changes in thinking and improved friendships. Other frequently cited changes were changes in attitude, improved family relationships and socialising more. Improved behaviour was mentioned by four participants and should therefore be noted as a change for some participants. Many of these changes are consistent with previous findings showing changes in mood, self-expression, insight and communication (Cooper, 2004, Bondi et al, 2006), as well as those relating to changed perspectives, improved relationships (Bondi et al, 2006), and increases in self-confidence and being more assertive (Cooper, 2004).

These findings suggest that improvements were not only apparent on an interpersonal and emotional level, but that there was also clear evidence of behavioural change. This differs somewhat from some previous research which has suggested that changes had less effect on behaviour than other areas of functioning (Cooper, 2006a) and may indicate that schools counselling can have a positive effect on all three of these important areas in young people's lives. Furthermore, changes appear to be apparent both in the school environment and outside

of school, thus supporting previous evidence that changes have an important impact in the classroom environment as well as at home (Sherry, 1999; Cooper 2004; Bondi et al, 2006; Cooper, 2006a)

Interestingly, particular emphasis was placed on the importance of improvements in participants' relationships. When asked to rate changes for how significant they have been in their lives, improved family relationships were rated as 'Extremely Important' by all but one of those who mentioned this change, and improved relationships with friends were rated as 'Very Important' by all but one of those who mentioned his change.

The most commonly cited helpful aspects of counselling were talking or getting things out; counsellor qualities; being able to talk about things that they felt unable to talk to family/friends about; having other help alongside counselling; feeling listened to/understood; and confidentiality/privacy. Talking or getting things out, feeling listened to/understood and confidentiality/privacy have all been frequently identified as important in previous research (Sherry, 1999; Fox & Butler, 2003; Cooper 2004; Cooper, 2006a; Cooper, 2006b). Counsellor qualities have been highlighted as helpful, though less frequently in previous research (Bondi et al, 2006; Cooper, 2009).

Whereas some previous studies have found that guidance, advice or specific techniques have been identified by young people as particularly helpful aspects of (primarily humanistic or psychodynamic) school-based counselling (Cooper, 2004; Bondi et al, 2006), this was not the case in the present research. However, this does not indicate that these therapeutic methods were experienced as unhelpful, as they may simply not have been offered to the young people.

Consistent with previous research, young people voiced few criticisms about school-based counselling. However, as in previous research (Cooper, 2004, 2009), a small minority of clients did express a desire for a more active, advice- and guidance-giving style of

counselling. This issue, of whether guidance and direction are valued by young people in school-based counselling, remains a key one for future research in the field.

A limitation of the present study is that data from young people who received counselling was not compared against those who had *not* received counselling. Such a comparison would have been very helpful in identifying the actual *impact* of the counselling, over and above any changes that may have been due to time effects or maturation. Furthermore, although the semi-structured, standardised interview protocol helped to establish common domains of responses, it is possible that a more open-ended interview approach would have facilitated the emergence of more novel themes. Finally, the standardised and relatively short-term nature of the counselling intervention means that the findings can only be generalised to the wider counselling field with caution.

## **Conclusions**

Young people in this study had very positive views of the counselling they received, and associated counselling with a number of positive changes. These changes were in interpersonal, emotional and behavioural domains, both inside and outside of school. Helpful aspects of counselling focused mainly on having the opportunity to talk and “get things out” with a counsellor whose personal qualities made talking easier. It is therefore concluded that in-school counselling is viewed as a valuable intervention by those young people who have experienced it.

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to thank the young people who took part in this study and to the school staff who supported the research. Special thanks to Professor Robert Elliott for allowing the Client Change Interview to be adapted for this study. Thanks also to the

following people for their input into the adapting and administering of the Client Change Interviews: Karen Cromarty; Katherine McArthur, Sue Pattison, Kaye Richards and Nancy Rowland.

### **Author Contributions**

Rosemarie Lynass was responsible for analysing the data and writing this report. Rosemarie worked under the supervision of Mick Cooper who also helped with the design of the study, and acted as the Chief Investigator for the pilot randomised clinical trial from which this data was derived. Olga Pykhtina, contributed to the design and implementation of the study.

### **Biographical Details**

Rosemarie Lynass has previously trained as a Person-Centred Counsellor and is currently undertaking further training as a Counselling Psychologist. Rosemarie is also a lecturer in Psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Olga Pykhtina is a Doctoral student at Newcastle University. Olga's PhD explores 'Possibilities of digital technology application into child play therapy'.

Mick Cooper is a Professor of Counselling at the University of Strathclyde, and co-director of the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. Mick has authored a range of papers and reports on school-based humanistic counselling; as well as books and articles on person-centred, existential and pluralistic approaches to therapy.

## REFERENCES

- Bondi, L., Forbat, L., Gallagher, M., Plows, V. & Prior, S. (2006). *Evaluation of the Youth Counselling Service, Airdrie Local Health Care Co-Operative*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh
- Boyatzis, R.E. (1998). *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. London: Sage
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101
- Cooper, M. (2004). *Counselling in Schools Project: Evaluation Report*. Glasgow: Counselling Unit, University of Strathclyde.
- Cooper, M. (2006a). *Counselling in Schools Project Phase II: Evaluation Report*. Glasgow: Counselling Unit, University of Strathclyde.
- Cooper, M. (2006b). *Analysis of the evaluation data. In East Renfrewshire Youth Counselling Service (ERYCS): Development and evaluation of a full-time secondary school and community based youth counselling service in Scotland 2005*. East Renfrewshire: East Renfrewshire Council.
- Cooper, M. (2009). Counselling in UK Secondary Schools: A Comprehensive Review of Audit and Evaluation Literature. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 9(3), 137-150.
- Cooper, M. and McLeod, J. (2011) *Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy*, London: Sage.
- Cooper, M, Rowland, N, McArthur, K., Pattison, S, Cromarty, K, and Richards, K (2010). Randomised controlled trial of school-based humanistic counselling for emotional

distress in young people: feasibility study and preliminary indications of efficacy.

*Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 4 (1). pp.1-12.

Elliott, R. (1996). *Client Change Interview Schedule. Unpublished Research Instrument*

Department of Psychology, University of Toledo.

Fox, C & Butler, I. (2003). *Evaluation of the NSPCC Schools Teams. Glasgow: Keele: Keele*

University

Loynd, C. (2002). *Excellence Fund Evaluation of the School Students Counsellor Programme*

2000-2002. Aberdeen

Sherry, J. (1999). *LEA- Organised Counselling in Secondary Schools in Dudley. Dudley*

Counselling Service

**Table 1: Identified Changes and Change Ratings**

	<b>No. of clients</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Slightly important</b>	<b>Pretty important</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Extremely important</b>
<b>More confident/feeling good about self</b>	6			1	3	2
<b>Family relationships improved</b>	5		1			4
<b>Able to talk about things more easily</b>	4			1	1	2
<b>Other people noticing changes</b>	4			1	2	1
<b>Improved relationship with friends</b>	4		1		3	
<b>Thinking differently</b>	3			2	1	
<b>Happier</b>	3			1	1	1
<b>Concentrating in school more</b>	2			1		1
<b>Coping better</b>	2				1	1
<b>More active/energetic</b>	2		1		1	
<b>Helping others more/being nicer to others</b>	2				1	1
<b>Worrying less</b>	2					2
<b>Calmer</b>	2			1		1
<b>Less grumpy/arguing less</b>	2			1	1	
<b>Standing up for self/dealing with bullies</b>	2				2	
<b>Going to school more</b>	1					1
<b>Enjoying school more</b>	1				1	
<b>Doing better in school</b>	1					1
<b>Going out/socialising more</b>	1			1		
<b>Seeing other people's perspective</b>	1			1		

Thinking about actions more	1				1	
More positive	1				1	
More accepting	1		1			
Able to focus better	1					1
Behaviour Improved	1				1	
Thinking of self more	1		1			
Taking care of appearance	1				1	

Table 2: Likelihood of Change without Counselling Ratings by Frequency

Likelihood Rating	Very Unlikely	Slightly Unlikely	Neither likely nor Unlikely	Pretty Likely	Very Likely
Frequency	16	23	9	3	0
Percentage	31	45	18	6	0

Table 3: Response Frequencies for Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes and Sub-Themes	Frequency (possible max.)
<i>Counselling experienced as positive/helpful</i>	9(10)
<i>Helpful aspects of counselling</i>	
Talking/getting things out	9(11)
Counsellor qualities	7 (11)
Can talk about things can't talk to family/friends about	6(11)
Other people helped alongside counselling eg friends/family	6(11)
Feeling listened to/understood	6 (11)
Confidential/ private	6 (11)
Being treated as an equal/not being told what to do	5 (11)
Trusted counsellor	4 (11)
Counsellor feedback/different perspective	4 (11)
Looking at ways to change	4( 11)
Atmosphere/room	4 (11)
Things about self that helped make use of counselling	4 (11)



<b><i>Positive Changes</i></b>	
<b>Being seen differently by others</b>	9 (11)
<b>Talking about feelings more easily</b>	7(11)
<b>Improvements in school (attendance, performance or enjoyment)</b>	7 (11)
<b>More confident/increased self-esteem</b>	7(11)
<b>Changed thinking- different perspective</b>	7(11)
<b>Happier</b>	6(11)
<b>Improved relationship with friends</b>	6 (11)
<b>Stronger/standing up for self more</b>	6(11)
<b>Changed attitude- more positive</b>	5(11)
<b>Improved family relationships</b>	5(11)
<b>Socialising more/getting out more</b>	5 (11)
<b>Improved behaviour</b>	4(11)
<i>Difficult but Okay</i>	
<b>Talking about personal things</b>	5 (10)
<b>Strange/unusual being in counselling</b>	4 (10)
<b><i>Problematic Aspects of Counselling</i></b>	
<b>Things that didn't change although wanted them to</b>	4 (10)
<b>More sessions/longer sessions wanted</b>	3 (10)
<b>Missing lessons</b>	2 (10)
<b>Not enough questions/advice</b>	2 (10)
<b>No changes perceived</b>	2 (11)

Figure 1: Themes and Sub-Themes



