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Facilitator Development Institute

The Facilitator Development Institute (F.D.I.) is one of the activities of the Centre for Cross-Cultural Communication. In Britain this provides one workshop each summer and a follow-up workshop held in autumn or early winter.

The Institute is international. Last year nine countries were represented. The Institute concerns itself with the training of people who wish to become more effective in their work with other people. In this sense F.D.I. can be seen as a place 'for helpers to get help'. A place where professionals can be heard and understood as persons, not as 'counsellors', 'therapists', 'teachers', 'social-workers', 'managers', and 'doctors'. It is a fresh escape into something which is totally *for each person*, not one which assumes responsibilities *for* the other. It is a unique experience for many people who are locked into institutional routine, rigidity, boredom, and pressure.

F.D.I. exists because it provides a form of training which is not offered in most state-run educational institutions.

THEORY

1. *Facilitation.*

The Central concept in the workshop is 'facilitation' of learning: the creation of those conditions which help people to promote their learning - whether that happens in therapy, education or any other learning situation.

No two persons are the same, and what is a 'facilitative' condition for one is not necessarily so for another. For one person a therapist or teacher who actively encourages and praises will be facilitative, for another one a more passive, quiet person will be more facilitative.

In other words: the therapist's or teacher's behaviour will be facilitative or non-facilitative, depending on the people he is working with and the situation they are in.

2. *Learning to be facilitative.*

Training therapists to display certain behaviour that, under all circumstances, would be effective, would therefore be inadequate: different people and different situations ask for different behaviour.

A different approach to training is to help the participant to develop his awareness and sensitivity towards other people, situations, and himself, rather than to train him to acquire a wide range of behaviours.

3. *Rogerian Philosophy about facilitation.*

In the 1950s the research of Barrett-Lennard offered confirmation of the view held by Carl Rogers and his co-workers that while the facilitative effect of therapist *behaviours* was unpredictable there did seem to be certain attitudes which, if held by the therapist, tended to be facilitative for the client. These attitudes are variously quoted and described in most of Rogers' writings and we can summarise as:

1. 'does the therapist like the client?' (positive regard').
2. 'How far is the therapist's like conditional on the client holding certain attitudes or values or displaying certain behaviours?' ('unconditionality of regard').
3. 'How far can the therapist understand the client's feelings from the client's own frame of reference?' ('empathy').
4. 'Is the therapist's outward behaviour in correspondence with his feelings?' ('congruence').

4. *Different ways of learning*

Our key question now is, 'How can we 'train' people in the helping professions to develop these attitudes which tend to be facilitative?' To develop attitudes we must work with all the components of the attitude: the cognitive (thinking) component; the affective (feeling) components; and the behavioural component.

A common educational approach is to centre mainly on the cognitive component. Here the student may read books, listen to lectures given by 'experts'; and write about his learning in examinations. Most of this is cognitively based. It is not involving his actual feelings in relation to other people, nor is he having the experience of getting feedback from others on the behavioural expression of his attitude. The learning situation is not as complete as it would be if he were more totally involved as a thinking, feeling, and behaving person. Let us take an example. One of the major blocks to the development of the previously mentioned facilitative attitudes is defensiveness. If I feel defensive in relation to my client or student I will find it difficult to like him (1); my liking will probably be conditional upon his not behaving in ways which make me feel defensive (2); if I am defending my frame of reference it would be almost impossible for me to allow myself to try to understand his frame of reference (3); if I try to hide my defensiveness I would certainly be incongruent (4). Now I could read books on defensiveness; listen to lectures; and perfectly describe less-defensive behaviour in an examination. But I wonder if I would actually then *feel* less defensive in the living, feeling situation with my client or student?

However, if my learning situation was one in which from time to time I actually felt defensive, and the others with me helped me to see myself and understand myself more, and I was able to experiment with other behaviours with the same atmosphere of feedback, then perhaps I am more likely to become less defensive.

5. *Facilitator Development.*

Part of our philosophy then, in our workshops, is to emphasise experimental learning involving the thinking, feeling, and behaviour of the participant. We try to create an environment in which the participants will be fully involved as persons not as 'students' or 'trainees'. A vitally important aspect of this environment is that participants are encouraged *to take responsibility for themselves* and for what happens during the programme. There is considerable freedom for them to design a programme which they consider worthwhile. The individual participant is encouraged to express his wishes and to endeavour to have them met in the context of the wishes of others.

The most important requirement for a staff member is to be able to function in a facilitative way in a constantly changing situation. No two workshops will be alike - even within one workshop no two days will be alike. Staff members acting as 'experts' is incompatible with this philosophy, for this would take the learning emphasis away from the participant and inhibit the development of his ability to take responsibility for himself and his personal learning.

Facilitator Development Workshops.

To describe what exactly happens in facilitator development workshops is rather difficult since what happens will depend a great deal on those who are present.

Usually time is divided between meetings in small groups (10-12 people), large meetings of the whole community (about 40 people), and special interest groups around issues in which the staff have expertise and others which evolve from the interests of participants. As time goes on a climate of trust and greater openness gradually develops. In this atmosphere of trust people find a lesser need for personal defences and facades, so enabling them to relate to one another in ways that help them to recognise and change self-defeating attitudes and test out more innovative and constructive behaviours. This atmosphere encourages people to take responsibility for their own attitudes and behaviours, to discover their stereotypes and see the ways in which their values affect their behaviour towards others.

The generalisations mentioned above cannot give much sense for many different learnings which individual participants have experienced. From the continued contact we have at the follow-up and from letters and later meetings, we get some idea of the longer term effects of these workshops. Here are a few of the things people have written:

'During the programme it took me 5 days to fully realise that I had power over what happened to me in my life. I had always taken a passive role in life - always blaming things on others and seldom taking responsibility. During the Programme I realised that I need not be so impotent. It was frightening!' (teacher).

'One of the most important things I got out of the Programme was the realisation that I could listen to people and that was much more important for them than talking to them. Now, in my work as student counsellor I am more focussed on my client and her needs rather than on my own needs to show that I am 'good'. I feel more confident, patient, and also more effective in work. (student counsellor girls' school).

'A dramatic change has taken place in me. I now find that I treat my employees as human beings. . . and it works'. (Company Manager).

'In the short term I found that the Programme had helped me a lot, but now it's too difficult. I can't maintain the change in the outside world. I am sad about that'. (Personnel Manager).

'During the Programme I wasn't affected at all. I came into it with the assumption that feelings were dangerous and should be kept out of my work. Now I realise that feelings are a part of my work with others - there's no way human beings can avoid feelings. It's even a logical impossibility. I wish I had realised this simple fact before the Programme.' (Headmaster).

'Suddenly other people weren't so much of a threat to me.' (Social Worker).

ARE WE DISABLING?

For quite some time now I have been concerned about the way in which humanistic psychology and humanistic psychologists have tended to set themselves apart from both the academic community and from the community generally. In particular, I have been concerned about the expropriation of the notion of 'growth' by humanistic psychologists and about the entrepreneurs of humanism. I hope, through this short note to explore some of these concerns with others and open a dialogue with fellow AHP members about our activities.

Let me say a number of things right away. First, humanistic psychology provides the only meaningful framework for me to make sense of the psychology I know. Psychology is about people, their interactions, beliefs, attitudes, values, enthusiasms and trauma's - it is not about statistics, rats running mazes, diagnosis or theories *except* in so far as these things help us illuminate our selves. In promoting humanistic psychology I am therefore concerned to demonstrate its use to people in finding out about themselves - humanistic psychology as self-appropriated learning makes sense.