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## CO-COUNSELLING

### A Method of Self Development

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Most of us are aware of rigid unhelpful patterns in our behaviour. The patterns hold us back, and prevent us from being as loving, creative, rational and zestful as we feel we ultimately could be. These patterns are caused by the accumulated hurts that we receive throughout our lives, but particularly in our formative years. These hurts can be re-examined and discharged.

Co-Counselling is a brilliant but simple idea. Two people come together to give each other reciprocal support. First one is the client and the other counsellor, and later the roles are reversed. The time is shared equally between the two. All material worked on in a session is strictly confidential to that session and participants in courses will be expected to give a clear commitment to respecting confidentiality. During the basic training people learn to be both clients and counsellors. They are introduced to a variety of simple techniques to use with each other that enables them to release stored-up distress. These results are people who feel more real and energetic, people who develop a more positive and celebratory attitude towards themselves and to those around them.

After the basic training, which at present is 50 hours, Co-Counselling is free. Co-Counsellors become members of a local group such as the London Co-Counselling Community. There are communities in most parts of Britain, as well as on the Continent and in America. The Communities arrange a variety of workshops, offer on-going groups, drop-in groups and publish newsletters as well as lists of other Co-Counsellors. There is a real commitment in Co-Counselling International to our communities being genuine peer/democratic communities.

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**Peter Clark** is a former Vice-Chairman of AHP. He teaches Co-Counselling Fundamentals courses in Adult Education Institutes in London, and trains Co-Counselling teachers. He is leading an open Introductory Workshop for the AHP on 12th January (see previous page).

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