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**SCOTTISH SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS, AND CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF, COUNSELLING**

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# SCOTTISH SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS, AND CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF, COUNSELLING

*Abstract: This paper presents the findings of two independent questionnaire studies that examined Scottish secondary schools teachers' attitudes towards, and conceptualisation of, school counselling. Seventy-one teachers in a first study, and 33 teachers in a second study, responded to a range of qualitative and quantitative response-format questions that were designed to elicit their feelings and attitudes towards school counselling, and their notions of what counselling was. Results from the two studies confirm previous findings in this area, suggesting that teachers are generally positive in their attitudes towards counselling; valuing, in particular, the independence and expertise of the counsellor. A small minority of teachers, however, were found to hold strongly negative views towards counselling. Teachers also expressed concerns that students might abuse the counselling service, and that the service might not fully integrate with existing guidance arrangements provided by teachers in schools. The study also found that a high proportion of teachers conceptualised counselling in terms of advice-giving.*

## INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, counselling in schools is not a new phenomenon, but it continues to challenge those working at the interface between education and therapy. At the front line of this interface are classroom teachers who represent the largest body of

professionals on whom the success of a school-based counselling service is likely to depend.

The very idea of having counsellors in schools raises some key questions for education. Maureen Freely (2002) suggests that counselling is going to work best when the basic attitudes and principles of counselling inform the whole school. This view highlights the importance of the receptivity of the school to the concept and practice of counselling and supports the contention that one significant component of that receptivity is the attitude of the teachers.

Prompted by the recent interest in Scotland in introducing counsellors to secondary schools, the researchers set out to discover how receptive and informed Scottish teachers were towards counselling. Our particular interest was the attitudes and conceptualisations of teachers who had little or no direct experience of working with school-based counsellors. In this respect, we sought to investigate teachers' 'social representations' (Moscovici, 1984) of counselling, that is, their beliefs, values and assumptions about what counselling might be. More specifically, we wanted to find out: how positive or negative teachers were towards counselling; what kind of factors co-varied with these attitudes; what teachers saw as the potential benefits of, and difficulties with, a school-based counselling service; what they imagined counselling to be; and the kinds of students they imagined would attend counselling.

This particular study was located within the Scottish Education system which, since 1986, has had a pastoral care structure that differentiates it from elsewhere in the UK (Howieson & Semple, 2000). Notably this system has involved, until recently, the

appointment of promoted teachers, known as 'guidance teachers,' with particular responsibility for care and welfare of all pupils. This difference is important in terms of contextualising the teachers' attitudes and feelings towards counselling. However, it should be emphasised that this study was concerned with the attitudes and values of *all* teachers, not jut those in guidance. Hence, the findings should remain relevant to a wider national and international context.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitudes towards counselling and psychotherapy have been examined in a variety of 'lay' populations (e.g. Le Surf & Lynch, 1999; Savaya, 1995; West & Reynolds, 1995). However, a literature search using PsychINFO, BIDS ISI, ISI Web of Science, Counsel.lit, Index to Theses, and Google found no previous studies directly examining the attitudes of teachers to counselling, though a handful of related studies were identified (Navin et al., 1996; Tatar, 1998; M. W. Watkins et al., 2001). In addition, a small number of research reports and evaluations exist that have included studies of teachers' attitudes towards counselling (Baginsky, 2003; Burnison, 2003; Fox & Butler, 2003; Montgomery, 2003; Newton, 1993). In the majority of these instances, however, this is with reference to a counselling service that has already been in existence for one or more years.

Nevertheless, what the research indicates is that teachers generally have a positive attitude towards counselling in schools, and see it as a much-needed resource. In her qualitative study of teachers in five Birmingham secondary schools, for instance, Montgomery (2003) found that teachers in two of the schools were unequivocally

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positive about the idea of having a counsellor, whilst teachers in a further two were 'reported as either being supportive of the counselling or not expressing an opinion' (2003, p.68). Similarly, in his survey of the attitudes of 248 teachers and classroom assistants to a pre-existing counselling service in ten Northern Irish secondary and primary schools, Baginsky (2003) reports that 98.4 percent of respondents rated the service as either 'essential' or 'important,' with only one respondent stating that they felt the service was 'not particularly useful.' Similar results were found by Fox and Butler (2003, p.77), who surveyed 149 teachers in 16 schools -- 88 of whom were secondary school teachers and 61 primary school teachers -- as part of the evaluation of the nation-wide NSPCC Schools Teams. Here, ninety-seven percent of respondents said that there was either 'a lot of need' or 'some need' for the existing counselling service for pupils in their school. Navin et al. (1996) and Watkins et al. (2001) also found that teachers perceive counselling as an important and necessary resource for dealing with students' emotional difficulties.

In terms of what teachers see as the benefits of having a counsellor in their school, a number of commonalities emerged across previous studies. First and foremost, teachers seem to value the fact that the counsellor is an 'independent' presence in the school: someone that the pupils can talk to who is not a parent or teacher. Twenty-four percent of the teachers in the Fox and Butler (2003) study, and 30.2 percent in the Baginsky (2003) study, gave an open response that was coded in this way. Second to this, the teachers seem to value the fact that the counsellor was a 'specialist' and someone 'with training and/or expertise,' a response given by 13 percent of the teachers in the Fox and Butler study, 19.4 percent in the Baginsky study, and the most frequent response in the Newton (1993) study. Closely related to this, five percent of

the respondents in the Fox and Butler, and several in the Baginsky study, responded to the question 'What are the benefits (if any) of having a school counselling service?' by highlighting the limitations on the input that teachers can provide, both in terms of expertise and time. This would seem to correspond with Howieson and Semple's (2000) finding that, due to time pressure, guidance teachers do not feel they have adequate contact with all of the pupils on their case load; as well as Tatar's (1998) finding that Israeli teachers do not feel that they have sufficient time, space or training to sufficiently respond to children's emotional needs. Around ten percent of the teachers in both the Fox and Butler and Baginsky study also said that they valued the 'Confidentiality' of the counsellor, as well as the fact that they were 'Someone with time to listen.'

Previous research also indicates that teachers do not have a universally positive view of counselling. Montgomery (2003), for instance, found a climate of scepticism towards counselling in one of the five schools that she studied, where teachers did not feel that such work was appropriate to an educational environment. Montgomery also suggests that in this school, where teachers had to deal with high levels of aggression from pupils, they did not see why pupils, 'should have an easy comfy seat to sit on and the space to talk about their problems' (p.68). More anecdotally, Peter Ellis (2002), writing in *The Guardian*, also suggests that some teachers don't appreciate a counsellor's intervention. He quotes one counsellor as claiming, 'Some teachers feel we should be able to wave a magic wand. They want to see a child cured after a few sessions. But often a child's problems may have gone on for years and are not simply solved' (p.23).

This quote suggests that a negative view towards counselling may be related to a relatively poor understanding of it, and this view is endorsed by Peter Lang (1999), who writes that 'many teachers' understand of the nature of counselling is at best very general and at worst mistaken and confused' (p.25). Based on an historical analysis of the development of counselling in schools, Lang suggests that part of the reason for this misunderstanding is that many teachers have only had contact with counselling as an outside agency, and that, 'They see counselling presented in the media as a kind of emergency service brought into action after some form of disaster. They also see publicity for the ever-increasing range of certificates and diplomas claiming to equip people to counsel' (p.25). Lang goes on to suggest that some teachers holding senior pastoral posts may feel threatened by the appointment of counsellors: experiencing the service as something that has been imposed upon them.

Many of the respondents in the Fox and Butler study (2003), and just under forty percent in the Baginsky study (2003), also identified possible difficulties or problems with a counselling service. Foremost amongst these were the perceived dangers of children abusing the system, primarily through missing lessons (16 percent of respondents in the Fox and Butler study; seven percent in the Baginsky study). The danger of stigmatisation of clients was also identified as a possible problem by seven percent of respondents in the Fox and Butler study, and by eight percent of respondents in the Baginsky study.

As suggested by Lang (1999), potential difficulties in the counsellor-teacher relationship, and the counsellor's involvement within the wider school environment, have also been commented upon by several teachers in previous studies. Poor

communication between counsellors and teachers was identified as a potential

problem by five percent of the teachers in the Fox and Butler (2003) study and two

percent in the Baginsky study. Burnison (2003), in his evaluation of the NSPCC

School's Counselling and Support Service in Northern Ireland, also found that a small

number of teachers wanted more feedback from the counsellors, because they were

concerned about what the pupils might be saying about them.

Interestingly, then, whilst teachers would seem to value the independence of a school

counsellor, they would also seem to have some concerns about a potential lack of

integration between the counsellor and the school structures. Such a tension can be

usefully conceptualised in terms of Bond's (1992) distinction between an 'integrated'

model of counselling in education, in which the counsellor is, first-and-foremost, an

integral member of the school team with a primary ethical responsibility to the

organisation; and a 'differentiated' model of counselling in education, in which the

counsellor is essentially distinct from other members of the school staff and has a

primary responsibility to his or her clients. These different models have substantial

implications for the level of confidentiality that the counsellor offers the client, and it

would seem, from previous research, that teachers (as well as counsellors) are

somewhat pulled between these two different models of counselling in education.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Study One**

The first study was conducted as part of an evaluation of a two-year pilot project

located in three large Glasgow secondary schools where counsellors had just started

working on a one day a week basis in each school. The school roll was around 1000 pupils per school. Two of the schools are situated in urban inner city locations drawing pupils from socially mixed communities. The third school is situated in a suburban neighbourhood drawing pupils from a largely owner-occupied residential area. The pilot project was entirely funded by Greater Glasgow NHS Board as part of its Child and Adolescent Mental Health Scheme (CAMHS). This funding served to emphasise the fact that the counsellors were working in, but were not of, the school in terms of line management responsibility.

The questionnaire was designed specifically for this study, and used a range of open- and closed-ended questions. The first two questionnaire items asked teachers to judge, on an eleven point scale, how important they believed it to be to have a counsellor based in the school and how familiar they were with the role and purpose of the counsellor. In order to get some idea of their conceptualisation of counselling, they were then asked to provide three words they associated with counselling. Three further questions asked what issues they thought might be brought to the counsellor and who might use the counselling service most in terms of sex and age. In addition to these questions, teachers were asked to state their sex, age category, and how many years they had been in teaching and in this particular school.

For the purposes of analysis, each of the words that the teachers gave as their conceptualisations of counselling were coded independently by the two researchers involved with study one. They then met and agreed a common set of categories. Working together, they then coded each of the responses within one – and only one – of the categories.

The counsellors started working in the school in mid-October and the questionnaires were distributed in mid-December. Two hundred and ten questionnaires were circulated via individual trays in the school offices to all teachers in the three schools and they were asked to return the completed forms via sealed ballot boxes in the same office. A response rate of 34 percent was achieved across the three schools. Of those respondents who gave their gender, 56 percent were female and 34 percent were male. The mean number of years teaching was 19.41 and the mean number of years at the school was 11.04.

The researcher who designed and distributed the questionnaire (Hough) was also the manager of the pilot counselling service, and the researcher who analysed the data (Cooper) was its evaluator. Both researchers believe strongly in the value of counselling for young people.

**Study Two**

This study was conducted as part of an evaluation of a School Student Counselling Service situated in a secondary school in Aberdeen. The secondary school has a roll of 1059 pupils and 87 full time equivalent teaching staff including visiting specialists, such as health professionals. The counselling service was funded by Excellence Fund money from the Scottish Executive, a fund created as part of the Government's commitment to raising standards and promoting social inclusion
(Scottish Executive Education Department, 1999).

The questionnaire used in study two was developed independently from the study one questionnaire, and aimed to assess the teacher's perception of counselling and related issue – of which only the items relevant to teachers' attitudes towards, and conceptualisations of, counselling will be discussed here. The questionnaire comprised 60 statements each with a six point rating scale against which respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement, ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 6 = 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire also included a section for personal details and there were four open response questions regarding the role of the counsellor and the respondent's apprehensions and expectations of the counselling service.

Sixty questionnaires were distributed to a teaching staff of 87 full time equivalent posts in June 2000 (which included members of the management team and behavioural support) approximately six months after the School Student Counselling project began. Thirty-three questionnaires were returned of the 60: a response rate of 55 percent. Twenty-four percent of respondents were male and 76 percent were female. The mean number of years qualified was 17.85 and the mean number of years teaching at the school was 7.8.

The researcher involved in study two (Loynd) was an assistant psychologist employed by the local authority in order to evaluate of the effectiveness of all the Excellence Fund Initiatives, including the Counselling Project.

**RESULTS**

**Study One**

Seventy of the seventy-one respondents answered the question 'How important do you judge it to be to have a school counsellor based in your school?' On a scale of zero to ten, where zero equals 'not at all' and ten equals 'essential', respondents gave a mean score of 7.47 (s. d. 2.94), with a median score of 8 and a mode score of 10 (40 per cent of all responses). Five of the respondents (7 percent) gave a score of 0 or 1.

This generally positive attitude towards counselling was also evident in the teachers' 'further comments' – a part of the questionnaire filled in by 22 of the respondents (31 percent). Nine of the teachers (13 percent of the overall sample) wrote here that they felt that the counselling was a positive and much needed resource: an 'excellent initiative', 'well worth a try', 'necessary and overdue', 'a very significant additional support for young people'. Two further teachers wrote that they felt the counsellor should be allocated more time.

Two main areas of concern were raised in this section of the questionnaire. First, ten of the respondents (14 percent of the total sample) stated that they would have liked to have had more information – or would like on-going information – about the counselling service: for instance, how to make referrals, where it was based, what the scope of the service was, what evidence there was to demonstrate that counselling would be effective, and, indeed, the fact that a counselling service actually existed (up to this point, no information about the counselling service had been generally distributed). Five of these teachers also stated that they would like on-going information on how the services was operating and the kinds of issues that were being

dealt with – without breaking confidentiality – such that they would be more able to understand and support their pupils.

Related to this, a second area of concern raised by five of the teachers (7 percent of the overall sample) was the relationship between the counselling project and the guidance service provided by the teachers. 'I would not like counselling to take [the] place of guidance', wrote one teacher, 'but for delicate matters or if [the] pupil [is] not comfortable [with the] teacher, or requires specialist help which [the] guidance teacher feels [she or he] could not provide – then it would be helpful.' These respondents were keen to point out that many teaching staff already had counselling experience, could be trained to do counselling, or were 'professional and confidential'; such that the counselling service should be supplementing and linking in with the teachers' practices, rather than replacing them.

A one way analysis of variance revealed significant differences in attitudes towards counselling across the three schools (school one mean = 8.75, school two mean = 7.52, school three mean = 5.95) ($p < 0.01$); but not across sex, age, years of teaching, or years at the school. A significant positive correlation also existed between teachers' attitudes towards counselling and their self-ratings of familiarity with counselling ($\rho$ = .35, $p < 0.01$).

The category of words that was most frequently associated with counselling was listening (n = 32), followed by support (n = 25), help (n = 23) and advice (n = 20) (see figure one).

[Insert figure one about here]

Teachers believed that students would be most likely to bring family-related issues (n = 44) to counselling, which included such issues as 'family', 'home', 'domestic' and 'parents' (see figure two). Bullying (n = 32), simply mentioned as such, came second. School problems/issues (n = 17) came third, which included 'behaviour' (n = 7), 'exams' (n = 3) and 'truancy' (n = 1). It should be noted, however, that if school problems/issues is taken to include bullying, then this becomes the highest mentioned category. Forth came 'relationships' (n = 15), followed by a series of specific psychological difficulties, with 'sex' and 'health' also both mentioned four times.

[Insert figure two about here]

Thirty-one of the teachers thought that girls would be most likely to use the service, seven thought that boys would be most likely to use the service, and 29 thought that boys and girls would be equally likely to use the service.

Twenty of the teachers, the highest percentage, anticipated that the use of the counselling service would be equal across the school years. The second most frequent response to this question was that third year pupils would be most likely to use the service (n = 15), followed by first year pupils (n = 8) and fifth year pupils (n = 7).

**Study Two**

Responses to the evaluative questionnaire items suggest, again, that teachers were generally positive in their attitude towards counselling, with high levels of agreement

on questionnaire items that described counselling as a potentially helpful addition to the school's resources for dealing with students' emotional difficulties. These include: 'The counselling service can make a difference in the lives of students' (mean = 5.42) (1 = 'strongly Disagree' and 6 = 'Strongly Agree'); 'The counselling can help students think about their problems in a more positive way' (mean = 5.09); 'Counselling can help students learn strategies and coping skills for use in different situations' (mean = 5.03). Similarly, the teachers tended to express disagreement with statements that described counselling as a potentially counter-productive service: 'I have significant reservations about a counselling service for students in this school' (mean = 1.39); 'The work of the counsellor will undermine my authority as a teacher' (mean = 1.48); 'Money would have been better spent on existing support than on the provision of a counselling service' (mean = 2.42); 'Consultations with the counsellor are disruptive to students' work in class' (mean = 2.76).

This generally positive attitude towards counselling was also evident in the teachers' 'additional comments' – a part of the questionnaire filled in by fifteen of the teachers (45 percent of the overall sample). Eleven of the teachers (33 percent of the overall sample) wrote here that they felt that the counselling was a positive and much needed resource: a 'valuable addition', 'an excellent system to introduce', 'a positive initiative', 'an excellent idea'.

In the open response questions, teachers identified two particular advantages of having a counsellor as part of the school's resources for dealing with student's emotional difficulties. First, seven of the teachers (21 percent of the total sample) emphasised the fact that the counsellor was someone outside of the 'home, school and

community triangle': 'impartial', 'neutral', 'confidential'; and therefore someone that the students might be more willing to approach and discuss their problems with. Second, two of the teachers (6 percent of the total sample) wrote about the counsellors having particular skills, and therefore being more able to help the students deal with their problems.

Two main responses emerged to the open-ended question: 'What particular concerns do you have about the introduction of a school counsellor service for the students in your school?' First, nine of the teachers (27 percent of the total sample) said that they were concerned that students might 'abuse', 'misuse' or 'take advantage' of the service, using it as an excuse to get out of classes or be late for them. Second, five of the teachers (15 percent of the total sample) stated that they were concerned that there would be insufficient communication between the counsellor and the school staff on such matters as the progress that students were making in counselling, or students who might be appropriate for counselling. One of these teachers also stated a concern that the counselling service might duplicate the work already done by the guidance teachers, and that there was a need for 'a clear-cut job description'.

Responses to a range of further questions helped broaden an understanding of how teachers conceptualised counselling. The responses, for instance, suggested a strong agreement with the idea that counselling should be in the school rather than the community (mean = 1.52). There was also strong support for the idea that teachers view the counsellor as part of the school team (mean = 5.53) and that the counsellor should get pupil's consent before consulting with class teachers (mean = 5.09).

**DISCUSSION**

The data from these two studies strongly supports findings from previous research. First, in general, teachers would seem to hold a positive view towards counselling, and see it as a much-needed resource. As these studies demonstrate, this would seem to be the case even where teachers have little experience of working alongside a fully-established counselling service; although, as hypothesised in the literature review, it seems that teachers who are more familiar with counselling -- as well as more experienced teachers -- tend to have a more positive view of it.

However, such findings must be treated with caution for a number of reasons. First, in both studies, the response rate was far short of 100 percent, and it seems possible that teachers who did not return their questionnaires held a less positive attitude towards counselling. Second, given that the counselling services were part of school-endorsed initiatives and that the researchers were associated with these initiatives, teachers may have wanted to appear positive and welcoming towards such a project, despite the anonymity of their responses. Third, in terms of generalising at the national and international level, the particular pastoral system implemented in Scotland -- with its single, unified guidance system (Howieson & Semple, 2000) -- may have influenced teachers attitudes in some way. At best, then, what can be concluded is that there is a substantial body of secondary school teachers in Scotland who are willing to express a positive attitude towards counselling, and this would seem to correspond with findings elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

The results from these studies also triangulates well with previous findings regarding teachers views on the benefits of having a counselling service. Most significantly,

teachers seem to value the fact that the counsellor is an independent person, someone outside of the 'home, school and community triangle.' Second to this, teachers seem to value the specialist skills that a counsellor brings with them. From our first study, it would seem that teachers believe that some students will be bringing such emotionally-charged issues as abuse, pregnancy, family break up, self harming and bereavement to their counsellor, and it would seem that teachers feel that these issues are beyond their 'comfort zones', and require the skills of a professionally-trained counsellor.

As with previous studies, however, the present studies also found that a small minority of teachers held strongly negative attitude towards an in-school counselling service: seven percent in the first study rating such a service as 'not at all' important or virtually not at all important. Exactly why these teachers felt this way is not clear, though it did seem to correspond with a view of counselling as 'indulgent' and 'pointless'. Indeed, one of the teachers, on being asked the question, 'What three words would you associate with counselling', gave the answers: 'bleeding', 'heart' and 'liberal'! As with Montgomery's (2003) study, there is also some evidence that negative attitudes towards counselling vary on a school-wide basis, as well as at the individual level.

The results from these studies also confirm previous findings regarding the difficulties that teachers perceive in the establishment and existence of a counselling service. Most prevalent here, as in previous studies, was a concern that pupils would exploit the system, in particular, using it as an excuse to get out of classes. Teachers' concerns about inadequate levels of communication between counsellors and teaching

staff were also identified in these studies, as were concerns that a counselling service might displace, or compound, the role of guidance teachers. As Lang (1999) suggests, then, a small number of teachers may feel threatened by the introduction of a professional counselling service -- though the small number of teachers in study two endorsing the item 'The work of the counsellor will undermine my authority as a teacher' suggests that this may be less than Lang suggests. Nevertheless, as discussed in the literature review, the findings from this study do confirm the tension that seems to exist between teachers' desires for a school counsellor who is integrated into the school community, and their desire for one who is more strongly differentiated.

In terms of how teachers conceptualise counselling, much of this would seem to accord with counsellors own conceptualisations of their work: particularly those from a person-centred background (Mearns & Thorne, 1999, p.1) where 'listening', 'support' and 'help' are key elements of the counselling work. As is Newton's (1993) study, however, a notable proportion of teachers also seemed to associate counselling with 'guidance' and 'advice' – terms that counsellors may be less likely to see as part of their remit. Here, Newton suggests that teachers may view counselling as a 'pro active process based on transferring ideas and values to the pupil rather than facilitating expression and exploration with the pupil' (p.30). Taking this further, it may be that some teachers are positive towards counselling because they see it as a means of ensuring an orderly school community, where the role of the counsellor is to smooth out any emotional or behavioural 'disruptions'. Such a view of counselling locates it in the business of social control rather than liberation and personal transformation, and may come about where pastoral and guidance systems are not well-understood. In these cases, writes Watkins, 'the pastoral system [can become]

distorted into discipline and non-compliant pupils are shovelled off to counsellors to have their personhood processed' (2001, p.267).

What also seems evident from these findings, however, is that teachers can see the benefits of both a model of counselling in which the teacher is integrated into the school, and one in which he or she is more differentiated and independent (Bond, 1992). As suggested by previous research, then, tensions do seem to exist in the extent to which teachers believe that counsellors should be integrated into the wider school environment, and these tensions continue to raise important ethical issues for the practice of counselling in schools.

What are the implications of this study? First, it would seem that counsellors working in schools in Scotland and the UK – or hoping to develop school-based counselling services – can be reassured that a significant body of teachers are fully supportive of their enterprise. Clearly, teachers would seem to express a great amount of goodwill towards counselling, and given the time-pressures that many guidance teachers feel they are under to respond to pupils' emotional needs (e.g. Howieson & Semple, 2000), such a welcoming attitude is, perhaps, not entirely surprising. It is also clear, however, that some teachers, and some schools, may be less than favourable in their attitudes towards counselling, and a more detailed examination of such attitudes -- for instance, through in depth qualitative research, or through obtaining a higher response rate -- would be a worthy topic of further research. With respect to further research, the use of more standardised and validated scales would also enhance an understanding of teachers' attitudes to counselling; and it would also be useful to

distinguish between guidance teachers and other teachers, to see if these groups vary significantly in their attitudes towards, and conceptualisations, of counselling.

**CONCLUSION**

If, as in Scotland at the moment, there is the possibility that counsellors will be located in more and more schools, one of the factors that will impinge on the success or otherwise of such ventures will be the degree of acceptance by the schools. The attitude of individual teachers is therefore of particular significance. This study has shown that teachers by and large are receptive to counselling and are reasonably well informed as to its nature. Nevertheless it has shown that there remain a minority of teachers hostile to the very idea of counselling; and that, in some instances, the perception of counselling is skewed towards a directive/solution focused conceptualisation. In addition, there would seem to exist a tension between the teachers' desires for a counselling service that is integrated into the wider school community, and one that remains independent and neutral.

One way forward is to continue to keep the dialogue open between counsellors and teachers and to build on the more positive outcomes that appear to be generated, the longer the counselling service is in place (Newton, 1993). This dialogue is also being fostered by, for instance, the publication of such documents as *Guidelines for counselling in schools* (Newton, 2002).

It also has to be remembered that schools are complex organisations with a number of change factors working at any one time. The political and social policy agenda, the

specific attitudes of headteachers, the community context and the needs of the young

people themselves all contribute to the likely impact of integrating counselling into

schools. Therefore further research is needed not only in the area of teacher

perceptions but also in a systematic analysis of all the factors affecting the successful

integration of counselling so that it is genuinely in, but not necessarily of, the school.

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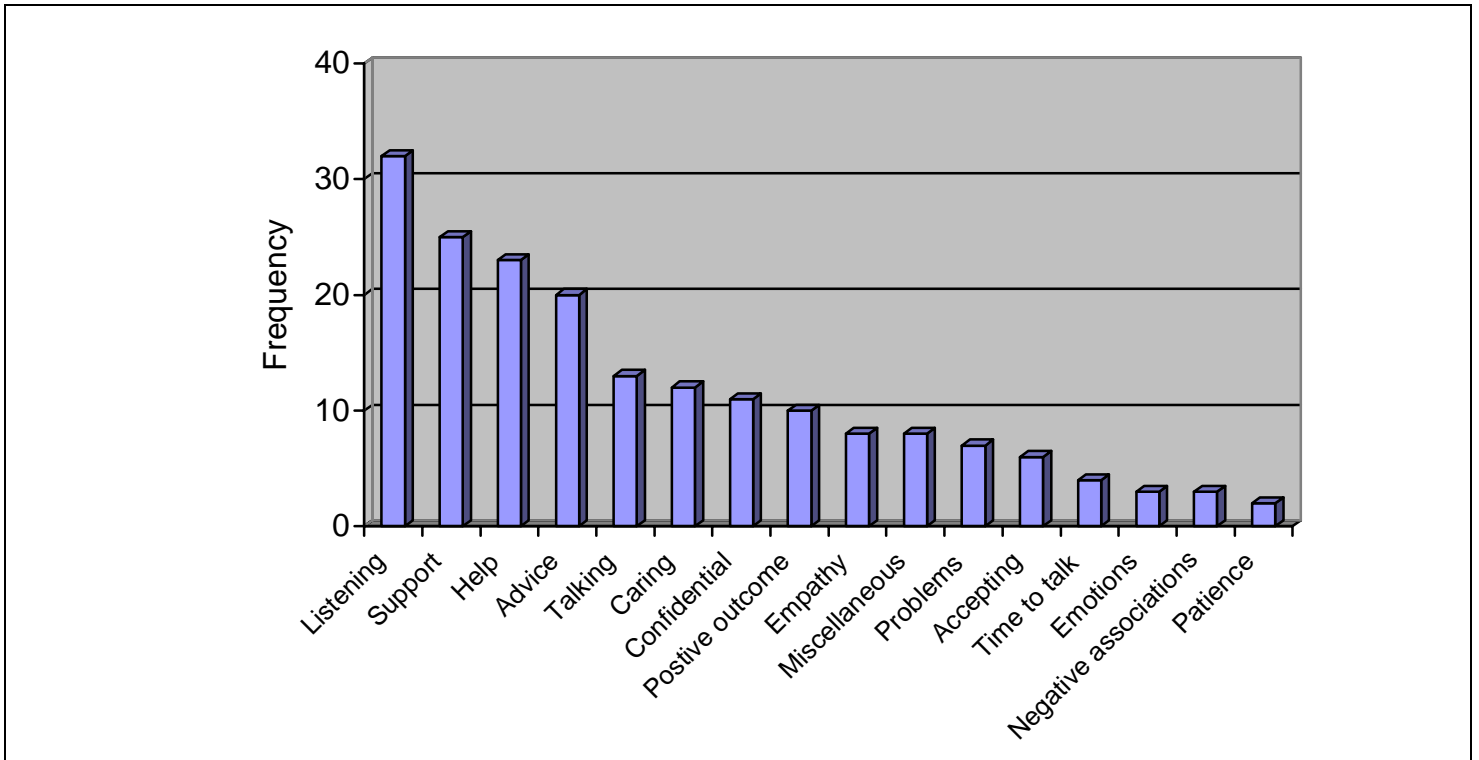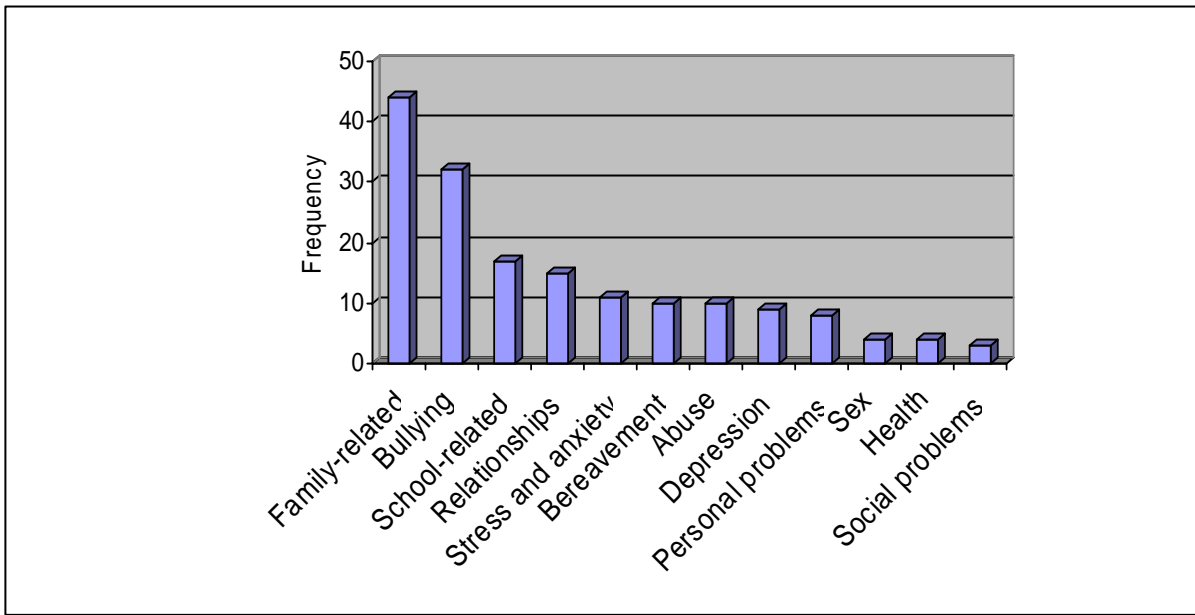
Figure one: Words associated with counselling

Figure two: Issues that teachers expected to be raised