FACTORS WHICH ENCOURAGE AND INHIBIT SELF DISCLOSURE
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

FIONA ELIZABETH HELEN OLD
B.Sc., University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1973
Diploma in Counselling Psychology,
University of British Columbia, 1982.

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Department of Counseling Psychology

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

Date 14th April '83
Factors which affect self-disclosure were investigated in this study. The literature on this topic was seen to be in a state of disorganisation, and an attempt was made here to develop some system by which the volume of information on what facilitates and hinders self-disclosure could be made more meaningful. The Critical Incident Technique was employed in the interviewing of twenty-five male and female subjects from an urban Unitarian Church, and by which method the data was analysed. It was found that subjects responded on a level of perceived meaning, and on this basis, factors, derived from the incidents presented by the subjects, were categorised. The process of categorisation brought forth a distinction that could be made between responses of factors that were meaningful in themselves, and responses that were mere indicators of meaning. Three major headings emerged: PERSONAL QUALITIES, PERCEIVED COMMONALITY or PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES, and SITUATIONAL which seemed to encompass the core of the meaning of these factors which influence the self-disclosing process. Subcategories which included the indicators of meaning were placed under these headings. Thus a system for deriving meaning from past and future disparate research was developed; a parallel was drawn between these results and the core conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness; and the implications of these results on the selection and training of counsellors were discussed.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background: The Importance of Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure has been regarded by some as the process by which a person learns to understand himself (Buber, 1965; Tillich, 1952). Further, self-disclosure, or permitting others to learn about significant aspects of oneself, is thought to be a major factor in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships and mental health. It seems that we come to know ourselves as an outcome of disclosing ourselves to another person. When we do not acknowledge who or what we are, we become alienated from ourselves and others.

Jourard (1964, 1971) has suggested that psychological and, in some instances, physical illness, may be a result of the playing out of personal or social roles which require the individual to be non self-disclosing, or which involve the hiding of significant aspects of the self. He defines a role as "a repertoire of behaviour patterns which must be rattled off in appropriate contexts, and all behaviour irrelevant to the role must be suppressed." Jourard says peoples' selves stop growing when they repress them, and this is what happens to us since few societal roles that a person plays do justice to all of the self. Consequently, the person cannot be himself. He may not know himself. He may be self-alienated. When Jourard says that self-disclosure is a means by which one achieves personality health, he means it is not until we are our real selves, and act our real selves, that
our real selves are in a position to grow.

A number of other researchers see self-disclosure as a concomitant of psychological health. Rogers' (1961) self-actualised person is one who is able to reveal himself to others. Mowrer (1961) contends that emotional disturbance is engendered by the guilt which follows failure to disclose one's misdeeds to significant others.

What consequences follow when people disclose their real selves to one another? Jourard (1971) suggests some of the obvious outcomes. They learn the extent to which they are similar, one to the other, and the extent to which they differ from one another in such as thoughts, feelings, roles and backgrounds. They learn of the other person's needs, enabling them to help him or to ensure that his needs will not be met. They learn the extent to which this person accords with or deviates from moral and ethical standards.

In any relationship, be it a counselling relationship or a personal one, a person may at first be cautious or distrustful regarding how much of herself she reveals. If she is listened to well, the person may go on to express all manner of confidences about herself, some of which she may have previously been unaware, and some of which elicit from within her feelings never before revealed to another. In choosing to be self-disclosing or otherwise, we face quite a dilemma. We can play safe and remain "phony" and unauthentic, or we can show our real selves to one another, our true thoughts, feelings, preferences and abilities, and risk rejection by others, the penalties of societal disapproval or false disclosure in response from someone else.
While self-disclosure is a risky process, it is also a necessary one if we are to follow the premises in counselling and psychotherapy, that when a person has been able to disclose herself to another person, she learns how to increase her contact with her real self, and she then may be better able to direct her life.

While some information about one's self is rather public and thus is readily disclosed, there is other information about one's self that is private or intimate and is revealed only under special circumstances. It is this private or intimate information about the self that ought to be the focus of both research and theorising about self-disclosure. Based on the belief voiced by such as Truax and Carkhuff (1965), and Jourard (1968), that progress in psychotherapy will vary directly as a function of the self-disclosing behaviour of the client, I contend that an understanding of the process of self-disclosure is fundamental to the practice of counselling psychology. As Rogers (1957), maintained, the counsellor uses himself as an agent to facilitate the client's growth. Allen (1973) and Strassberg (1975) stress the importance of self-disclosure for progress in psychotherapy. Allen commented, "In order for any form of psychotherapy to occur, a patient must reveal himself to the therapist (p. 306)." Therefore, as counsellors we must assume responsibility for gaining understanding of all identified components of the growth process, one aspect of which is that of self-exploration which includes within it self-disclosure. It is not that self-disclosure in itself should be considered the secret to the "cure," for as Egan (1975) says, it is a stage in a developmental
process. However, as Mowrer demonstrates, in some cases self-disclosure can release a great deal of healing forces or resources in any client, and thus adequate self-disclosing behaviour is predictive of therapeutic outcome (Truax and Carkhuff, 1965).

Given the importance of self-disclosure in counselling as well as every day life, it seems of great relevance to ask, considering the need for privacy and the risks involved in revealing one's self to another, what happens in the mind of the discloser that frees that person to speak of the self she holds so close?

The Problem

This study was primarily concerned with examining what factors facilitate and hinder self-disclosure. The question to be asked of the discloser was what, from their perspective, encouraged disclosure that they would not ordinarily say.

This question arose out of the realization that many factors must contribute to create willingness on the part of the discloser to take the risks involved in self-revelation, so vital to progress in the process of counselling. Some influences will arise from within the discloser, some will impinge upon the person from outside. Some will affect the discloser within the realm of his awareness, and some will motivate him unconsciously. Conversely, there are occasions when we, who are all at sometime or another disclosers, intend to reveal ourselves to another person, and yet find at the eleventh hour that we cannot or will not bring ourselves to utter the words representative of our inner core. Other factors aside, what is operating in the mind
of the discloser that perceives the recipient, or rejected recipient, as being worthy or unworthy of being privy to words aimed at so few?

If we as counsellors presume to affect the environment of our clients in ways amenable to the process of self-disclosure, then had we best not consult the self-discloser for his view of what renders for him an environment conducive to the process of sharing intimate aspects of himself?
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Self-Disclosure and Mental Health

A number of studies have uncovered evidence to support the beliefs of theorists such as Jourard who contend that self-disclosure, along with the feedback which it elicits from others, is basic to the development of self-knowledge and understanding, and consequently mental health.

Paulson (1980) found that maladjusted male adolescents disclose significantly less to father and male friend, and that they disclose significantly less about the topic of school and more about peer relations than do adjusted male adolescents. The implications here are based on the words of Haley (1962, 1963); Jackson (1965); Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967), that the importance of a good relationship with one's father is consistent with the belief that personality, character, and deviance are shaped by the individual's interactions within the family context. Together these findings indicated a lack of significant communication and relationship with other males for the maladjusted adolescents, suggesting that they are important factors contributing to the boys' subsequent maladjustment.

In contrast, Gorman (1973) showed that there is a strong positive relationship between adjustment and self-disclosing behaviour of priests. In general, the better adjusted ones reveal more about themselves in every aspect of their lives, than the less well adjusted ones.
A second study relating self-disclosure to fuller functioning is that of Weinstein (1973). The information revealed in this exploratory study provided support for the construct of altered states of consciousness as a way of assessing the structures of human consciousness and their relationships to dimensions of health factors. These structures were shown to be aspects of intimacy (perimeters or distances of self-disclosure) and age (time). An alteration was conceptualized as a shift to greater intimacy as measured by the Self-Disclosure Questionnaire.

A third study (Humphrey, 1976) found no statistically significant curvilinear relationship, but did find a weak positive relationship between self-disclosure and mental health.

One study very much concerned with the effects of disclosure on the discloser is that of Fishbein and Laird (1978). Results were interpreted to suggest that altered self-perceptions of one's worth may be a consequence of concealment of disclosure. The act of controlling information about a personal attribute influenced the subjects' subsequent evaluations of that attribute. The concealer was apparently led by his act of concealment to view the critical attribute as negative, while the discloser was led by her disclosure to view the attribute as positive. In a similar study of self-disclosure as a function of self-esteem and repression sensitization, Keller (1975) found that low self-esteem in combination with high repression sensitization, was associated with significantly lower self-disclosure scores.
Two studies qualify how self-disclosure is related to fuller functioning. Kim (1973) attempted to demonstrate an interaction effect of self-disclosure and selectivity on emotion perception and social adjustment. The results indicated that self-disclosure influences the accuracy of emotion perception and social adjustment, as well as selectivity. The results also showed that females were more perceptive of others' emotions and better socially adjusted than males. This difference in emotion perception and social adjustment between males and females was attributed to the finding that females disclosed more than males, and higher disclosers were more perceptive of others' emotions and better socially adjusted than lower disclosers.

The ability to adequately differentiate various situational and interpersonal variables and adapt one's disclosures accordingly, has been termed "self-disclosure flexibility" (Chelune, 1975). The results of a study by Chelune (1977) support the notion that the concept of self-disclosure flexibility reflects perceptual awareness of the social-situational norms governing the appropriateness of self-disclosing behaviour. The ability to adjust or adapt to situational changes is considered to be generally indicate of positive mental functioning (Freeman and Giovannoni, 1969).

The findings regarding selectivity in the first of these two studies, and self-disclosure flexibility in the second, point towards the individual, who is able to modulate his self-disclosure across a wider range of social situations in response to situational or interpersonal demands, as being more likely to function inter-personally
more adequately than the person who has not learned the discriminant cues that signal whether disclosure is appropriate or inappropriate.

Generally, all these studies imply that at the very least self-disclosure is related to mental health. The majority of them have shown that those people who are well adjusted, or have high self-esteem, or have a positive sense of their self worth, are also people who are found to be very willing to self-disclose, or who indeed do self-disclose a great deal. Those who score low on self-disclosure are seen to be less well adjusted. However, a couple of studies have indicated that indiscriminate self-disclosure is not healthful, and those who are sensitive to the appropriateness of self-disclosure in different situations are considered to be better able to relate to others than those who are not.

Factors Affecting Self-Disclosure

In order to rate the privacy of intimacy value of self-disclosure, early research designs have made use of some kind of rating procedure. Subjects have been asked to rate either their willingness to share or their prior experience in sharing information about themselves on a sixty-item questionnaire. Jourard's (1958) initial research in which he sorted the sixty items into six general categories, produced two clusters of self-disclosure, a high disclosure cluster (information about one's attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, and work) and a low disclosure cluster (information about one's finances, personality and body). These patterns of self-disclosure have been shown to be highly similar over sex, race, and several national groups.
Most of the ensuing research then, will have measured the degree of self-disclosure on the part of subjects in this, or similar ways.

Despite the increasing volume of research being conducted on the subject of self-disclosure, there have been few attempts at compilation of a comprehensive overview of this area. Goodstein and Reinecker (1974), however, have published a review of the literature on factors which affect self-disclosure. Of particular interest to this study is information regarding how the self-discloser perceives the target of self-disclosure, and what variables the self-discloser considers to have been of importance in their willingness to share, or not, their private, intimate information. Goodstein and Reinecker point out that people are differentially self-disclosing, depending on their relationship with the target person or recipient of the self-disclosure. Jourard and Landsman (1960); Rickers-Ovsiankina (1956); Rickers-Ovsiankina and Kusmin (1958) report that we disclose more to those with whom we are intimate, as would be expected. Also, Rickers-Ovsiankina and Kusmin (1958) report that we are also willing to share fairly intimate disclosures with total strangers. So we self-disclose to those who have already demonstrated that they will not punish our self-disclosure, and to those who have no capacity for punishing such behaviour, namely, total strangers.

Having chosen our target for self-disclosure, what more specifically is there about this person, or what does this person do that encourages
us to go ahead and reveal ourselves, or inhibits us from saying what it is that we intended to say? Much of the literature has focused in particular on the process of self-disclosure in the counselling situation, rather than within personal relationships outside the therapeutic setting. Factors shown to affect self-disclosure which pertain to how the self-discloser sees the target person, and how they have influenced the discloser's willingness, or otherwise, to self-disclose, include among them:

- Liking for the target
- Sex of the target
- Personality similarity
- Self-disclosure
- Professional level
- Race
- Type of response from the target
- Moral development
- Experience and training
- Physical attractiveness
- Trustworthiness
- Voice quality
- Status/position of power
- Eye contact
- Body motion/language
- Religious status
- Need for protection/approval
- Touch
- Style of interviewing

Liking for the Target

Barrell and Jourard (1976) found that although we may be more willing to disclose to someone we like because of the meaningfulness of the relationship, we may also fear that much would be lost if this relationship is permanently damaged by the disclosure. It appears, they say, that a liked person is always perceived as important to us, while a disliked person might be perceived as important or unimportant. Therefore, a fundamental variable related to willingness to self-disclose appears to be the perceived importance of the other person.

The results of Gelman and McGinley (1978) indicated that people are more attracted to others whose self-disclosure is similar to their own level of self-disclosure, and that this attraction has an effect on the person's self-disclosure. This finding implies that the congruity of disclosure level between therapist and client, may not be as crucial for the client whose characteristic level of disclosure is high, since the client is likely to continue his or her personal disclosure in the presence of the therapist. However, if a client who has a characteristically low level of disclosure, perceives his or her therapist to be overly disclosing, then there is the possibility that the client might develop negative feelings toward the therapist that could preclude or interfere with successful counselling.

Pederson and Higbee (1969b) report that disclosers attribute a variety of positive qualities to targets of self-disclosure, such as
warmth, friendliness, and closeness, suggesting that general liking can be further analyzed and differentially evaluated.

However, Gary, Davis and Devivo (1977) found that although examination of levels of intimate disclosures fluctuated across trials, the group process did not produce a significant change in the interpersonal attraction of individuals. In their study, the dependent variable of eye color, not liking, was the best predictor of changes across the slope of disclosures.

Some controversy exists, then, in how liking affects self-disclosure. While some studies say a factor such as eye color is a more reliable predictor of degree of self-disclosure, others indicate that aspects of liking or disliking, such as the importance of the individual, their warmth and friendliness, and their degree of attraction relating to how similarly they disclose, are all reliable predictors of whether a person will disclose or not.

**Sex of the Target**

Almost all studies unite in the finding that self-disclosure is affected by sex and sex role identity. Most studies support the finding that American females self-disclose more than males. Other generalities follows. Same sexed friends are reported as more frequent recipients of self-disclosure than opposite sexed friends (Dimond and Munx, 1967; Jourard et al., 1958, 1963, 1964, 1971). Mothers are reported as more frequently the recipients of self-disclosure by both high school students (Rivenbark, 1966) and college students (Jourard and Lasakow, 1958), regardless of sex. Married subjects tend to dis-
close more to their spouses than to any other general group of targets (Jourard and Lasakow, 1958).

Firstly, then are three studies on the effects of sex and reciprocity on self-disclosure. Buchman (1977) found, overall, that subject intimacy increased as interviewer intimacy increased; however, the pattern of increase varied according to the pairings of interviewer sex and subject sex. Female subjects with either interviewer, and male subjects with a female interviewer, were most intimate when interviewer intimacy was at a medium or high level; male subjects with a male interviewer were most intimate when interviewer intimacy was at a high level. In Wernimont's (1978) study, both male and female subjects showed a moderately consistent pattern of greater attraction for a same sexed interviewer who disclosed a high percent of similarity information when compared to a low percent of similarity information. Deforest's and Stone's (1980) results indicated strong support for the reciprocity effect, and indicated that females are more willing to disclose than males.

This leads into three more studies that found females to disclose significantly more than males. Fuller (1963) found that when counsellor sex and experience, and client sex, presenting problem, and preference regarding counsellor sex were controlled, female clients were judged to have expressed more feeling than males, and no preference clients' feeling expression scores increased more than did the scores of prefer-male clients. In client counsellor pairs, including a female, there was more expression of feeling and increase of same,
than in all male pairs. Eichler (1976) showed that females approached each other more on almost all dependent variables. Then, Lombardo and Berzonsky (1979), whose male and female subjects were interviewed by members of their same sex on three topics of increasing intimacy, found that there were significant differences in disclosure on the three topics, and that females disclosed significantly more than males. Their results support the assumptions that American females are encouraged to self-disclose but males are not encouraged.

The findings of Feldstein's (1979) study indicated males disclosed most to feminine female counsellors, and disclosed least to masculine female counsellors. Females, on the other hand, disclosed most to feminine male counsellors, and disclosed least to masculine male counsellors. In addition, male subjects indicated greater satisfaction with feminine counsellors than masculine counsellors, regardless of sex. Female subjects were most satisfied with masculine counsellors, regardless of sex.

So the trends that emerge, as outlined by these studies, in terms of how sex affects self-disclosure, are that males prefer feminine counsellors, and females prefer masculine counsellors, regardless of sex; females appear to disclose more than males; and the reciprocity effect applies to both sexes with certain sex pairing conditions.

**Personality Similarity**

Persons and Marks (1970) compared amount of self-disclosure to different targets. They discovered that interviewee self-disclosure was greatest when the interviewer had the same M.M.P.I. (Minnesota
Multiphasic Personality Inventory) code type as the interviewee, suggesting that personality similarity or compatibility may be a factor in self-disclosure. Much has been done to measure the relationship of psychological adjustment to self-disclosure, but this one study reveals the dearth of information regarding the relationship of personality similarity to self-disclosure.

Self-Disclosure

Within the context of interpersonal situations, research studies have suggested that self-disclosure may be governed by a principle of reciprocity, wherein self-disclosure by one party in a dyadic interaction, fosters increased or more intimate self-disclosure on the part of the other party.

The following studies support the concept of reciprocity. Scheid (1976) found that while in absolute terms participants were willing to discuss more intimate information as the counsellor was willing to share more information, on the other hand participants were willing to reveal proportionately less as the counsellor was willing to reveal more and more. Similarly, Giannandrea and Murphy (1973) found that an intermediate number of counsellor similarity self-disclosures resulted in significantly greater subject return than did few or many self-disclosures. Mann and Murphy (1975) supported the reciprocity hypothesis, and found that positive results occurred employing both similar and dissimilar self-disclosures. Then Feigenbaum (1977) demonstrated reciprocity in self-disclosure, and also showed that interviewers' self-disclosures were not superior to reflecting comments in eliciting
intimate self-disclosures by the interviewees.

A similar study by Jourard and Jaffe (1970) examined the modeling phenomenon. Subjects did disclose themselves on a variety of personal topics, and the length of their utterances was obviously influenced by the duration of the experimenter's disclosures. The results of Bundza and Simonson (1973) paralleled those of Jourard and Jaffe (1970). The therapist's disclosures in both studies were warm. The results of the studies of Simonson (1976), and Derlega and Lovell (1976), whilst similar in their findings, also suggest that while some disclosure by a warm therapist can facilitate patient disclosure, it can also be overdone, especially early in therapy, and can become counterproductive.

Doster and Brooks (1974) concluded that the presence or absence of a model, rather than the positive or negative disclosures of the interviewer, had the strongest effect on interviewee self-disclosure. In contrast, Jones (1979) found that with positive modeling conditions the highest self-disclosures occurred, and with the negative modeling conditions the lowest self-disclosures occurred.

However, in his review of the research on the effects of modeling procedures in helping relationships, Heller (1969) cited a study by Whalen (1969) in which Whalen found that in a group setting neither instructions nor modeling alone could produce high levels of self-disclosure. A combination of detailed, exhortative instructions plus modeling were required.

Lastly, are two studies which examined the effects of the nature of the self-disclosure of the counsellor on the client. McCarthy and
Betz (1978) drew a distinction between self-disclosing and self-involving responses. The former they defined as "a statement of factual information on the part of the helper about himself or herself." The latter they defined as "a statement of the helper's personal response to statements made by the helpee." Their results suggest that counsellor self-involving responses may be more likely than self-disclosing responses to enhance the process of client self-exploration in the present, and to maintain the focus of the counselling relationship on the client, rather than on the counsellor. Gabbert (1976) found that it was only in groups receiving both cognitive (the information), and behavioural (the way in which information is disclosed) forms of the interviewer disclosure, that any measurable increase in interviewee disclosure resulted.

Most studies seem to support the notion of reciprocity, and show that appropriate modeling has an effect on self-disclosure. Very high self-disclosure on the part of the counsellor is seen as counter-productive in eliciting self-disclosure from clients, and personal statements from the interviewer encourage more intimate responses from clients than does factual information.

**Professional Level**

Acosta (1979) found that subjects showed significantly higher self-disclosure to the therapist introduced as an Anglo American professional. It was concluded that the therapist characteristic of ethnicity and professional level are important for eliciting different client responses.
Race

In relation to other investigations on racial differences, besides the preceding study, the results point out a good measure of complexity in self-disclosure patterns. Blacks report less total self-disclosure on self-report inventories (Dimond and Hellkamp, 1969; Jourard, 1958), and less self-disclosure to their fathers than do whites (Jourard, 1958; Jourard and Lasakow, 1958; Littlefield, 1969). The most consistent national difference is that of total reported self-disclosure, with Americans generally the most self-disclosing.

An example of a study contrary to the findings of Acosta (1979) where ethnicity was deemed important, is that of Casciani (1978). His findings indicate that the race of a self-disclosing model is not a significant factor in affecting white subjects' self-disclosures, whereas the model's sex and topic affect are significant factors.

Derlega and Stepien (1977) did studies which reflected different attitudes about sex roles governing self-disclosure by American versus Polish subjects. In their first study, most American norms governing reactions to self-disclosure to friends and strangers were replicated. Disclosure of personal information to a stranger is disapproved, whereas disclosure to a friend is approved. Somewhat different from the American data, Polish students disapproved of nondisclosure to a friend, but not to a stranger. In the second study, American norms governing self-disclosure to males and females were not replicated. Polish students did not judge differently, disclosure by males and females.
Type of Response

Two similar studies were conducted by Shapiro, Krauss and Truax (1969) and Sasso (1976) with similar results. Sasso found the ability to communicate the following core conditions to be associated with self-disclosure: (1) empathic understanding; (2) respect; (3) genuineness; (4) self-disclosure; (5) concreteness; (6) confrontation; and (7) immediacy. Shapiro, Krauss and Truax (1969) found that individuals who were perceived as offering highest levels of therapeutic conditions of empathy, warmth and genuineness were given the most disclosure, both positive and negative.

Berger (1978) concluded that it appears that a good counsellor needs to have skills in various modes—to respond to feelings when the client expresses them, and to respond to logic when the client speaks logically. Showalter (1974) found that the smile stimulus produced significantly more affect statements than either nod or nod/smile.

In his study Burke (1976) found that one of the reasons spouses share with one another is that they receive novel perspectives on, or alternative approaches to their problems, and an enhancement of interpersonal understanding between the marital partners. Women resist disclosing because of unreceptiveness and unresponsiveness on the part of their husbands. Men reported that they do not disclose because their problems were beyond the appreciation or understanding of their wives.

Ability to communicate core conditions, responsiveness, and ability to respond at the level of the client, all encourage self-dis-
closure, these studies would indicate.

Moral Development

Barkley (1978) found in his study of practicum counsellors and clients that those pairs with higher moral development, tended to disclose more than those with lower moral development.

Experience and Training

Previous research suggests that individuals' disclosure histories are relevant to students' willingness to reveal themselves to help-givers, and to their perceptions of various helpers. Schneider and Lankford (1978) found that high disclosers thought that it was more appropriate for individuals to take greater risk in revealing personal information to help-givers than low disclosers. It appeared that individuals discriminated more among help-givers of different training when discussing personal, social problems than educational, vocational concerns. It is interesting that subjects did not discriminate among professionals' personal characteristics. Janpol (1977) conducted a related study and found that subjects with positive attitudes toward counselling were generally quite willing to self-disclose, regardless of counsellor status. However, for subjects with negative counselling attitudes, low status counsellors elicited more self-disclosure willingness than did high status counsellors. Finally Merluzzi and Banikiotes (1978) found expert and nonexpert high disclosing counsellors were more attractive than expert low disclosing counsellors.
From these studies, one perspective indicates that high disclosing counsellors are more attractive regardless of status, while another perspective shows that status is important in eliciting self-disclosure, especially in those with negative attitudes toward counselling. Also, actual training has been seen to be more important than personal characteristics in eliciting self-disclosure.

**Physical Attractiveness**

Cash and Salzbach (1978) found that self-disclosure improves the personal attractiveness of counsellors. Thus, the physically unappealing counsellor who selectively and contingently reveals appropriate personal feelings and experiences, can improve initial appeal to the point of equality or practical equality with counsellors whose appearances are advantageously predisposing. Marcus' (1976) results were supportive of the above study.

**Trustworthiness**

Woods (1978) concluded that the promise of confidentiality does make a difference in how open people are in their disclosures, at least in the initial stages of the relationship.

Cash, Stack and Luna (1975) found that subjects who scored high on the trust scale, and who therefore had more trusting attitudes toward people, behaved in a more trusting way. In support, Wheeless and Grotz (1977) found a modest linear relationship between individualized trust and various dimensions of self-disclosure.
The more trust people feel, and the more sure they are of confidentiality being respected, the more they self-disclose. However, it was concluded that sufficient levels of trust may be prerequisite to disclosure but not a guarantee of it.

**Voice Quality**

One study evaluated the effects of counsellor voice quality on self-disclosure levels. Female counsellor voices elicited significantly higher ratings of self-disclosure than male counsellor voices at all voice levels (Musika, 1978). Also, male subjects self-disclosed at higher levels than females. These findings seem to relate in a supportive way to the studies showing that males prefer feminine counsellors, but they do not seem to relate positively to the findings that females prefer masculine counsellors.

**Power**

High self-disclosure seems to make one appear to be more powerful, according to Asher (1978).

**Eye Contact**

The hypothesis that the face to face seating position would lead to a higher percentage of eye contact was confirmed by Griffin (1978). Subjects with greater contact with a confederate in the visual dimension increased contact in the verbal dimension.
Body Motion

Two studies can be cited under this heading.

Firstly, Schutz (1977) defined "body boundedness" as an individual's feelings that he is enclosed by a protective, delimiting surface. He found a curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and body boundedness, in that subjects with an intermediate level of body boundedness disclosed with greater intimacy than subjects with high or low levels of body boundedness.

Secondly, as body motion increased in the male counsellor-actor, subjects stated they would disclose themselves more. As body motion decreased in the female counsellor-actor, subjects indicated they would disclose more. These results were uncovered by Gardner (1973).

Religious Status

Attire, rather than religious status, appears to be more influential in eliciting responses from interviewees, according to Long and Long (1976). Males were more open in the presence of an interviewer not in habit; females with an interviewer wearing a habit.

Need for Approval

When approval is expected from the interviewer, need for approval, verbalization, and eye contact increased together (Heitzmann, 1974). However, when confrontation is expected, verbalization decreases as need for approval increases.

Cravens (1975) showed that high need for approval subjects revealed themselves more intimately in public than in private conditions,
whereas low and moderate need for approval subjects disclosed more intimately in private than in public.

**Touch**

Raiche (1977) found that child subjects chose a counsellor who employed touch significantly more frequently than the counsellor who did not.

**Interviewing Style**

Beharry (1976) and Rochers (1977), in support, found that type of interviewing style—self-disclosing, probing, reflective and supportive—produced no differential effects upon amount and intimacy of disclosure during the interview.

So ends a long and unorganized list. The research to date can be seen to have left this collection of studies, on factors which affect self-disclosure, in somewhat of a state of disarray. In the first place, short of the above mentioned review of the literature on the part of Goodstein and Reinecker (1974), next to nothing has been done in the way of penetrating this material in order to identify a central meaning, around which these influences over self-disclosing behaviour might revolve. It was one aim of this study to attempt to organize the volume of information about factors which affect self-disclosure, into some form of cohesive grouping. It was hoped that by doing this, some common denominators behind the numbers of factors so far cited, would be illuminated, and that a fuller understanding of why
these same factors do affect self-disclosure would be achieved. For example, it would be interesting to find out what is so powerful about voice quality, or body motion, or sex that self-disclosure is seen to be so definitely affected one way or the other.

Secondly, the studies have almost always used some kind of rating procedure to measure amount of actual self-disclosure, or willingness to self-disclose. The information thus received will then be confined by the limitations of those objective measures. It was thought that an open-ended and exploratory approach would be a valuable aim of this study, more likely to uncover information previously left dormant. One method of satisfying this aim was thought to be that of studying the subject directly from the discloser's point of view, rather than allowing some kind of rating scale to intervene. Another method was to employ an exploratory technique.

A large percentage of the research on self-disclosure has been conducted within the counselling analogue, and yet while we all participate in this aspect of human behaviour, only a small number of us engage in counselling activities, or even if so, only a small percentage of our self-disclosures take place within a counselling context. To look at what affects self-disclosure from the perspective of the population at large, rather than from the viewpoint of those familiar with, or prejudiced in favour of the counselling process, was a third aim of the study.

In summary then, this study is intended to explore and order current research, in the hopes that a new understanding of the information
could be reached. At the same time, the study was designed in such a way that it was left open to gleaning more information on what affects self-disclosure, and a population was chosen such that a wider cross range of perspectives was encouraged, than that confined to people with a counselling orientation.
CHAPTER III

Method

Subjects

The sample for this study was attained from a population of people who attend an urban Unitarian Church. The population consists of people of all ages, whose commonality rests in a code of ethics that encompass different philosophies and religions which are seen to be supportive of mankind. This population includes within it people from different races, professions and spiritual and secular beliefs. Included amongst these people are professional and lay counsellors, people who attend counselling, and people who neither practice counselling nor consider receiving counselling.

The subjects consisted of 25 Unitarian Church attenders: There were 20 females, and 5 males. Subjects' ages ranged from early twenties, to late sixties and early seventies. Occupations represented were such as student, teacher, writer, nurse, secretary, housewife, therapist, and some people were retired. Some of the subjects were involved in counselling, or had been involved in counselling, as clients or counsellors. The majority seemed to have had no direct experience with counselling. Almost all subjects had completed a high school education, and many had at least some college or university education.

These participants came forward in response to an initial letter of contact published in the church bulletin (see Appendix 1), and announcements made during two church services. Some of the subjects
volunteered in person to participate in the study, while others offered their services by phone. Subjects had been informed that the study to be conducted was to explore the topic of self-disclosure; that approximately one hour of their time would be required for individual interviews; that 25 male and/or female volunteers of 18 years and over were needed; and that interviews would be taped.

The Critical Incident Technique

The Critical Incident Technique was used in this study, and consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles (Flanagan, 1954). This method outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents of special significance which meet systematically defined criteria.

By an incident, is meant any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To be critical, an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer, and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects. The Critical Incident Technique developed from studies in the Aviation Psychology Program of the United States Army Air Forces in World War II. Flanagan (1946) wrote, "The procedure was developed for making systematic analyses of causes of good and poor performance. The object of the procedure was to obtain first hand reports, or reports from objective
records, of satisfactory and unsatisfactory execution of the task assigned. The cooperating individual described a situation in which success or failure was determined by specific reported causes.

This procedure was found very effective in obtaining information from individuals concerning their own errors, from subordinates concerning errors of their superiors, from supervisors with respect to their subordinates, and also from participants with respect to co-participants."

Once the incidents have been collected the next stage is to summarize and describe the data in an efficient manner so that it can be effectively used. Flanagan identifies three primary problems: (a) the selection of the general frame of reference that will be most useful for describing the incidents; (b) the inductive development of a set of major area and subarea headings; and (c) the selection of one or more levels along the specificity-generality continuum to use in reporting the requirements.

Flanagan discusses solutions to these problems as below:

(a) Frame of reference. In selecting the general nature of the classification, the principal consideration should be that of the uses to be made of the data. The preferred categories will be those believed to be most valuable in using the statement of requirements.

(b) Category formulation. The usual procedure is to sort a small sample of incidents into piles that are related to the frame of reference selected. After these tentative categories
have been established, brief definitions of them are made, and additional incidents are classified into them. During this process, needs for redéfinition and for the development of new categories are noted. This process continues until all the incidents have been classified.

(c) General behaviours. This is the problem of weighing the advantages of the specificity achieved in specific incidents against the simplicity of a relatively small number of headings.

Several considerations should be kept in mind in establishing headings for major areas and in stating critical requirements at the selected level of generality. These are listed below:

1. The headings should indicate a clear-cut and logical organization.
2. Titles should convey meaning in themselves.
3. The list of statements should be homogeneous, i.e., the headings for either areas or requirements should be parallel in content and structure.
4. Headings of a given type should all be of the same level of importance.
5. The headings used should be such that findings in terms of them will be easily applied and maximally useful.
6. The list of headings should be comprehensive and cover all incidents having significant frequencies.

Anderson and Nilsson (1964) are probably the best reference providing information on the reliability and validity of the Critical
Incident Technique. They studied several reliability and validity aspects of the method when it was applied in analyzing the job of store managers in a Swedish grocery company, including the following.

**Analysis: saturation and comprehensiveness.** An important question with this technique, is whether or not the collection of data has been sufficiently comprehensive to include all types of behavioural units that the method is seeking to cover. All incidents from the same interviewee were placed together. Then the first 5% of incidents in each of the groups of participants were put together in one group, and the next 5% of the incidents in another and so on. Twenty such groups were formed, numbered 1 to 20. In such a manner, it was possible to determine how the number of subcategories increased with the number of collected incidents, i.e., how soon in the collection procedure the subcategories come up. The number of subcategories increased very rapidly at the beginning, and became slower, and when about two-thirds of the incidents had been classified, 95% of all subcategories had appeared. Thus it seemed that the collection of the data had not been stopped too early.

**Reliability of collecting procedure.** A question of concern in this study is whether, and to what extent, the number of incidents and their distribution in subcategories were affected by the methods of collection, and by the interviewers. The interviews provided five incidents per person, and the questionnaire used, 2.5 incidents per person. Tested by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-sample test, the difference is significant. On the other hand, the structure of the two
materials was not affected in the same way. The rank correlation between the sizes of the categories was -.85, in spite of the fact that the percentage of replies to the questionnaire was very low (24%).

There were no great differences in the number of incidents per interview between the interviewers who interviewed the personnel. This was tested by the "Kruskal-Wallace one-way analysis of variance by ranks" for each of the four employee groups.

The rank correlations of the size of the categories between the materials of the interviewers A-E, were calculated. The materials of interviewers D and E were very small because they conducted fewer interviews. This may explain why the correlation coefficients for these interviewers were lower. They ranged from .56 to .86. The correlation coefficients for the materials of interviewers A-C ranged from .81 to .86. So, apart from D and E, the structures of the materials obtained by the interviewers are very similar, as shown by the coefficients of concordance (A-C W=.89; and A-E W=.78), and the average correlations (A-C $r_{av}^s = .83; A-E r_{av}^s = .72$).

Control of categorization. The essential thing seems to be that the category system chosen is an obvious one, and with as small a degree of arbitrariness and chance as possible. Andersson and Nilsson showed that even if two groups of students place an incident in different subcategories, they have struggled and shown a strong tendency to place the incident in the same category, before deciding on different categories. This in turn suggests that the category system chosen is plausible and not too subjective.
Analysis of contents of training literature. In order to study the question of validity, an analysis was made of the contents of the literature used by the enterprise in the internal training of managers. In general, it may be said that the analysis of contents did not reveal any new aspects, and so it appears that the Critical Incident method succeeded in including all the important aspects of the work.

The importance of the subcategories. Also, regarding validity is the question whether the incidents collected are really critical in the sense that a large number of judges find them important to the work at hand. The average reliability co-efficient calculated was .83 when 86 subcategories were rated on a six-point scale from 0 (unimportant) to 5 (of the greatest importance for the store manager's work).

In conclusion, these methodological checks are very supportive of the Critical Incident Technique. Both reliability and validity aspects of the technique, according to these studies reported, appear to be sound.

The Interview

In this study the Critical Incident Technique was employed to help subjects reveal, from their own perspective, what it was about the other person that encouraged them to self-disclose, or inhibited them from self-disclosing.

The interviewer opened the interview session with a standard preamble which ran as follows:

From time to time each one of us discloses to another person. This is when we say something about ourselves to another that we consider to be very personal or private. Sometimes we will say something about which we have previ-
ously been unaware, and at other times we may simply go ahead and reveal something that we have purposely kept hidden from other people. I am interested in learning what, from your own point of view, there might be about the person to whom you disclose, that encourages you in going ahead and revealing what it is you have to say.

The interview then could take place. The questions were open-ended, and became more probing as the subject responded.

* * *

The Interview

Interviewer: Can you think of a time, perhaps the last time, when you did say something about yourself, that you consider to be personal or private, to another person. Or, can you think of an occasion when you intended to say something personal but something about the other person, or something they did, caused you to change your mind.

Interviewer: (If the subject answers 'yes') Was what you said, (or nearly said), on this occasion so personal that you would not ordinarily say this to an acquaintance, or even a close friend?

Interviewer: (If subject answers 'yes') You have thought of an occasion when you self-disclosed (or nearly self-disclosed but changed your mind). Can you tell me what led up to this incident when you talked about yourself as you did (or nearly talked about yourself but changed your mind)?
Interviewer: Perhaps you could tell me what it was about this person to whom you disclosed (or nearly disclosed) or what it was that they did, that encouraged you to say what you did (or discouraged you from saying what you wanted to say)?

***

The interviewer then, by a process of reflecting and clarifying, probed for as much information as the subject could give, on what it was about the other person that encouraged them to self-disclose, or inhibited them from self-disclosing. In instances where the subject was unable to pinpoint an incident of self-disclosure, or an incident when they withdrew from self-disclosing, it was necessary for an exchange to take place between the interviewer and subject on the topic of self-disclosure along the lines of that outlined in the preamble to the interview, until such time as the subject could identify an incident about which they were willing to speak.

Procedure

Appointment times for the interview sessions were arranged with the subjects by phone. The Unitarian Church offered a room to be used for the purpose of the study. Twenty-one of the twenty-five subjects were seen on the church premises, and one subject was interviewed at The University of British Columbia campus, while three were interviewed in their homes. All of the interviews were carried out individually.

Following a brief introduction to the study, each subject was asked to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix 2). This form re-
minded the subject that their interview would be taped, and when de-
personalized notes had been extracted, the tapes would be erased. They
were also reminded of their volunteer status, and that they could with-
draw from the study entirely, or refuse to answer any question, without
penalty. They were also told that one hour had been selected, as an
average of the time required to conduct the interview, but that they
were free to finish earlier or take more time if they wished.

The standard preamble was then given to the subject and the inter-
view was carried out.
CHAPTER IV

Results

From this study of factors affecting self-disclosure, the 25 subjects came up with 88 incidents altogether. The incidents, 58 facilitating and 30 inhibiting, contained within them a total of 519 factors. This produced an average of 3.52 incidents per person, and approximately 20.76 factors each. Twenty of the 25 subjects were female, and they produced 46 of the 58 facilitating incidents, while the 5 males produced 12 facilitating incidents. The female subjects produced 25 of the 30 inhibiting incidents, and the males produced the other 5 inhibiting incidents.

Extraction of Factors

Having recorded the information on tape, it was necessary to transcribe the data into depersonalized notational form and erase the tapes. The first step involved separating facilitating and inhibiting incidents onto two stacks of cards. It became obvious throughout this process that each incident contained within it many and varied factors. It appeared that incidents in their entirety could not be used because of the number of factors contained within them.

At this point the meaning of the mass of information was unclear. The responses of the subjects were recorded on the cards in chronological order, and the information was scanned for meaning, frequency, and pattern amongst the factors.
One pattern which emerged early, and this was constant throughout all incidents, since it relates to the nature of the interview, was that the natural responses of the subjects produced factors which seemed meaningful in that they often related to the personal qualities of the target to whom they had disclosed, or to a lack in these same qualities, resulting in their decision to inhibit self-disclosure. When probed for further information, the subjects came up with specific features, acts which had signified to them the presence, or lack, of these qualities in their targets. But these specific features and acts were clearly secondary. Their importance depended upon their perceived meaning, and will be termed "indicators," to reflect this status.

In order to provide exemplification of this trend in the data, some quotations of subjects' responses of incidents containing facilitating factors, and incidents containing inhibiting factors, will be presented. In an attempt to give clarification of the responses which were natural, as distinct from those elicited due to probing on the part of the interviewer, the former will be underlined with a solid black line, and the probed responses with a dotted black line. These probed responses were those which later resulted in the emergence of "acts" and "behaviours" signifying the natural responses.

Sample 1: She showed understanding, concern and interest in how I was feeling. She's the type of person who wants sharing, self-disclosure, herself. So she's willing to express her feelings and things that are bothering her, and she wants the same for me. So it's a mutual sort of thing. I feel not so
willing to disclose with people who don't do the same with me.

**Sample 2:** I think the inhibiting factors would be, *if* she had said, *'gosh I really understand how you must feel; but she didn't*. Then you'd feel that that person's been there too, she understands what I'm feeling so it's o.k. to say a little bit more. But she shared a little bit in the fact that she said, 'I've had a similar experience but it's really my daughter'...she did self-disclose to a certain extent but really it was her daughter so that didn't make me feel that she really understood.

**Sample 3:** I respect him tremendously. He just seems to have a knack for understanding people. He's very, very warm. While I was sobbing my way through this tale, *he was holding my hand*, and that was a really, really nice gesture. There was *hugging and kissing*, and at the end of the evening I could tell him that I loved him.

**Sample 4:** I wanted this person to share this anger which I had always seen as bad, and here I was expressing it and enjoying the feeling, and this person wasn't with me and...*He created distance between us by moving away, he wouldn't look at me*; and I realized that when he moved so far away from me that *he had his back against the wall*, I realized that he was so uncomfortable that I stopped.
Sample 5: I very consciously chose her because she is an accepting person... She shared with me something that was important to her. There's something in people being beyond the kind of jargon thing that says, do I hear you saying, and that finishes me right off. And this was a thing she wasn't saying...applying rules to the situation. She wasn't mechanical.

Sample 6: I got quite angry about something and I read alarm in her eyes. She got quite startled when I raised my voice. I was brought to my senses at once. I was quite surprised to see the startled look in her eyes.

Sample 7: When I first disclosed to her she didn't react with fear... she could have reacted with a loathsomeness, but she didn't. She was accepting, and because of this she then added insights to it, and this really started the ball rolling.

Sample 8: I wanted to speak to her in a personal way, and each time, I haven't been able to analyze it, it hasn't been received on that same level, or there isn't the desire there. There's a politeness, a real politeness. It's the words, there's no empathy making you feel understood. She is simply not a listener, she immediately switches the subject, and takes it off to safer ground. Because I think self-disclosure usually involves feelings and emotions, reveals private things about one, and she simply does not want to hear that.
Sample 9: The process of exchanging personal experiences happened over a period of time, and she told me some things about herself that I suppose she wouldn't normally tell anyone, and so did I. So I suppose probably that was it.

Sample 10: I knew it would be upsetting to her. There's a lot of envy. I couldn't tell her because I knew that I would spoil her day. She has expressed envy on previous occasions. There's a sort of snide thing, dwelling on a weakness of mine. I don't quite trust her. There's an insincerity in her voice. Her voice becomes quite smooth, and just a little sarcastic, and I immediately know that she's not pleased.

Sample 11: She was having the same sort of feeling, and she said she was in the same situation. Certainly, I had trust in her, and certainly we were going through the same thing. She said something, and I said, 'God, I feel the same thing.'

Sample 12: He said he was bored by the film. That showed me we had different interests. I felt inhibited at that point. I felt that he didn't understand. I felt some barriers. I responded to a sense that he was holding back in an emotional way.

Sample 13: Yes, I think the fact she'd said that, and what came into my mind was that she needed to grieve openly, and if you wish people to become more comfortable about a thing, or open up, you open up yourself.
Sample 14: I felt that he drew back and that probably made me more wary, not willing to disclose or something, as much. There wasn't the depth of caring in this relationship. That was the difference. He was more withdrawn, physically, emotionally, and psychologically.

Sample 15: He was interested in what I was going to do. On other occasions he wouldn't have talked like that.

Sample 16: I don't see him as a very emotional person. I'm sure he has great depth of feeling, but he doesn't allow them to show. He doesn't disclose and I have no recollection of him disclosing. I know that the caring is there, but it's not shown in the way I need it. He doesn't talk about feelings with anyone. He just doesn't know how to open up.

Sample 17: We were both sharing. I was attracted to the person in the sense that I found myself on the same wave-length. There was an empathy of some sort.

Sample 18: As a result of her reaction, the unreasonableness of it... her reaction was, 'How can you do this to me, I'll never trust you again!' So as a result of that self-disclosure, which resulted in such a bad experience, a year and a half of hell, after that I thought I would be more secretive. She was intolerant, and unaccepting. She blamed me.
Sample 19: I ended up talking a lot more personally than I had planned to, and that was certainly because of the warmth that he showed me, and because he listened very intently, and his facial expression certainly showed me that he cared a great amount. Then he said to me, 'I think you're one of the finest people I've ever met.'

Sample 20: I knew that I would not tell her anything personal about my life because I don't talk to people about my life with the idea that it's going to be passed around to everyone else.

Sample 21: She was a very good listener, and she seemed really interested, she seemed trustworthy, and I liked her, I really liked her.

Sample 22: I felt I should say something to her about my situation, but I couldn't. It was impossible. I feel that she is not receptive, that she is going to be judgmental...I guess that she is going to use that information inappropriately. She was 'acting professional.' She went into this long thing, that put me off to start with, it was all theoretical and quite abstract. She hid behind all this gobble-de-gook, and I never knew who she was.

Sample 23: She really cared...she was very accepting...She wouldn't think there was anything wrong with me for asking those questions.
Sample 24: I felt that he was really quite bored, and not interested in what I was saying, so although I went back I disclosed considerably less than I wanted to, often because I got what I thought was indifference, a lack of acceptance, ... if someone was to hold me or touch me, that would make me feel cared for, but counsellors do not normally touch.

Sample 25: She is a very understanding person, and very accepting... She would tell me about her family and her problems. It is a mutual thing.

Sample 26: I felt that he would accept it in the right way. There was this mutual feeling of understanding. Also, he is an extremely warm person, he's large like a bear. He's a loving person. He's loving to everybody. I feel towards him as towards a father. I do feel that he has a fatherly care. He also easily discloses his own failures. I think you're more likely to tell something to a person who discloses failures or inadequacies, than a person who sets himself up as absolutely perfect. You can be honest, perfectly honest, and still hold back. But I think the kind of person you would tell something to is the kind that doesn't hold back himself.

Sample 27: We had been sharing experiences. I had asked a question, and I realized that it was quite a pointed question. I
didn't expect him to answer and he did. I thought I might have gone over a line that he might accept. He demonstrated more trust in me than I thought he had.

Sample 28: I think that she's interested in us as people not just as clients.

Categorization

The data pointed towards a potentially infinite number of factors. The need for organization, in terms of the meanings of the factors was evident. To identify categories of meaning at a similar level was the challenge. There appeared to be responses from the subject covering many different levels of meaning. As seen in the preceding examples, some responses gave direct meaning, and other responses described behaviours as though they were indicators of meaning.

It became apparent that the common thread running through the responses of all subjects, was that they seemed to have responded on a level of perceived meaning. It made sense then, for the major superordinate categories to be those of perceived meaning, rather than categories of acts and behaviours, such as "physical distance" or "eye contact," of which there were an unwieldy number.

Another feature of the data, which helped to consolidate the reasoning behind choosing perceived meaning as a level for categorization, was the apparent multiplicity of meanings for certain indicators. An example of this lies in the indicator "smiling," which for some people conveyed caring, and for others, attractiveness or likeability.
Similarly, the indicator "sex" for some subjects gave promise of caring in a target seen as a father figure or sister figure, while in others, the similarity of sex gave hope for understanding. Behaviours and acts, the indicators of meaning, seemed to vary too much in level of meaning for them to be used as a stable method of categorization.

To categorize on a level of perceived meaning was the decision. The factors, having been scanned for meaning, fell into three superordinate categories. The first superordinate category, and by far the most encompassing, was that relating to the personal qualities, or lack of them in the case of inhibiting factors, of the targets. This category was called "PERSONAL QUALITIES," for both facilitating and inhibiting factors.

The second superordinate category, related to aspects of the relationship between the target and the discloser, and since viewed by the discloser, was called the category of "PERCEIVED COMMONALITY," or "PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES," in the case of inhibiting factors.

The third superordinate category, embraced factors relating to circumstantial aspects of the disclosing situation, rather than relating to target, discloser or both. This category was entitled "SITUATIONAL," for both facilitating and inhibiting factors. The three superordinate categories, then, are:

PERSONAL QUALITIES

PERCEIVED COMMONALITY or PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES

SITUATIONAL
Categories of Facilitation and Hindrance

Within each superordinate category could be placed a series of basic categories. Identification of each basic category, and examples of the types of factors of which it was comprised, will follow.

Under the superordinate category PERSONAL QUALITIES were listed the following basic categories of facilitating and inhibiting factors

**Supportive**

F. The facilitating factors covered by this category included those in which the discloser felt that the target had shown confidence in him, or had been encouraging. For example, "He said encouraging things" was one factor given.

I. No matching category was needed for inhibiting factors.

**Likeable**

**Attractive**

F. Facilitating items here included aspects of the target the discloser found attractive such as, "I liked her," and "He joked a lot and that was relaxing."

I. Only "unattractive appearance" was included for the inhibiting factors.

**Trustworthy**

**Untrustworthy**

F. Facilitating items showed that the discloser felt trust in the target, such as the discloser expected that the target would maintain confidentiality, and that there was mutual trust.
I. The inhibiting factors included inability to trust the target, and lack of expectation that confidentiality would be maintained.

F. Here were placed items where the discloser said that she found the target respectful to her, or others in general.

I. Dismissal of the discloser's opinion, and a patronizing attitude were included here as inhibiting factors.

F. These factors described the target's reputation of respectability and integrity, and how the discloser saw the target as being respectable.

I. No category was needed for inhibiting factors.

F. The discloser would give factors such as, "He was quiet so I thought he was interested," and "He flirted," and many straightforward comments about the target appearing to be interested.

I. "Looked bored," "Didn't ask questions," and "wouldn't listen" were listed here as inhibiting factors under the Disinterested category.

F. Factors given which indicated the discloser's perception of caring included such items as "Like a
sister," "Said caring things," "He's very warm,"
Smiling, touch, kindness and gentleness were factors
placed here.

I. "Brusque," "Doesn't enjoy touch," "Moved away"
were all included here as inhibiting factors under
Lacking Warmth.

F. Positions such as counsellor, minister, doctor and
official, indicated competency to disclosers.
Intelligence, wisdom, and appearance of competency
and skillfulness were included here.

I. Unreasonableness in business was considered as an
inhibiting factor for the Unwise category.

F. A feminist attitude and appearance of understand-
ing are examples of factors included here, as were
the ability to communicate on a feeling level,
lack of intellectualization, and comments about
those who "Didn't ask questions" or "Didn't give
advice."

I. Lack of understanding was shown by factors describ-
ing lack of perception, misinterpretation, and ask-
ing questions that were too direct.
F. Factors involving the adjectives "Nonjudgmental," "Undemanding," "Uncritical," and "Accepting" were placed in this category.

I. "Judgmental" went into the Lacking Acceptance category.

F. The factors describing targets as being unaffected, not "Acting professional," sincere, happy in who they were, relaxed, and open about themselves, were placed in the Genuine category.

I. Inhibiting factors that showed lack of genuineness included items describing ambiguous behaviour, insincerity, and lack of self-disclosure.

Under the superordinate category PERCEIVED COMMONALITY were listed the following basic categories of facilitating factors, and under the category PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES were listed the following basic categories of inhibiting factors.

F. Factors listed here included those indicating prior knowledge of the topic on the part of the target.

I. A matching category was not required, since there were no matching inhibiting factors.
F. Facilitating factors included under Shared Interests, were those simply stating that the target was perceived to have interests in common with the discloser.

I. The inhibiting factors, indicating that target and discloser had different interests were comments such as "We talked about different things."

F. "We attended the same workshop" and "We had had similar life experiences" are examples of facilitating factors categorized here.

I. No matching category for inhibiting factors was necessary.

F. This category covered facilitating factors such as "She also was from the minority culture so I talked to her."

I. Similarly, the inhibiting factors cited belonging to a different culture, and differences in opinion related to culture, as being important.

F. Facilitating factors covered items indicating that similarity of sex encouraged the discloser to expect understanding.

I. No matching category was needed for inhibiting factors.
Shared Values
Different Values

F. Facilitating factors categorized here included similarity of attitudes, values, religious and spiritual beliefs.

I. Inhibiting factors placed under Different Values were those where the target behaved as though her values were different, or directly said that her values were different.

Similar Personality

F. Facilitating factors placed under Similar Personality were those in which the discloser perceived the target's personality to be similar to his own.

I. No matching category was required for inhibiting factors.

Under the superordinate category SITUATIONAL were listed the following facilitating and inhibiting factors.

Individual vs. Group

F. A facilitating factor placed in this category included an item citing a target in a one-to-one situation as encouraging to self-disclosure.

I. An inhibiting factor related to items in which disclosers were inhibited by a group situation.

Position of Power

F. The one item listed here related to the position of power of the target in a life threatening situation which encouraged self-disclosure.
I. No inhibiting factors under this category were in evidence.

Timing

F. The facilitating factors covered by this category referred to the timing of the target and discloser being together.

I. No inhibiting factors were found for this category.

Presence

F. Factors mentioned here were those which referred to the mere presence of another person as being enough to elicit self-disclosure.

I. No inhibiting factors were found for this category.

Vulnerable

F. The facilitating factors in this category referred to items in which the target was perceived as being in need of help. Sample 13 serves as an example, "What came into my mind was that she needed to grieve openly." This was seen as an opportunity to model self-disclosure to the target, by the discloser.

There was an element of arbitrariness in the categorization of these items. A separate superordinate category of "PERCEIVED NEED" could have been created. It was decided that since the target's vulnerability was likely a temporary state, that factors here could be considered SITUATIONAL.
I. The inhibiting factors related to the target being perceived as already in a burdened state, discouraging the potential discloser from "adding to her problems." The same arbitrariness for categorization applied here.

Reliability

Since there was so much uniformity between the factors, the subcategories and the superordinate categories, the employment of an independent judge to determine reliability seemed superfluous. Two examples of this uniformity follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Basic category</th>
<th>Superordinate Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Said caring things.</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target alone instead of group</td>
<td>Individual vs. Group</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequencies of Factors

This information is provided in graph form on Tables I and II, and a compilation of factors and their frequencies, subcategories and superordinate categories is provided in Appendix C.
Similar personality
- Shared values
- Sex
- Cultural Similarities
- Similar Experiences
- Shared Interests
- Shared Knowledge

Supportive
- Likeable/Attractive
- Respectful
- Respectable
- Interested
- Competent/Powerful
- Understanding
- Accepting
- Caring
- Genuine

Vulnerable
- Presence
- Timing
- Position of Power
- Individual vs. Group

Facilitating Factors

Table 1

Personal Qualities

Perceived Commonality

Situational
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Differences</th>
<th>Personal Qualities</th>
<th>Situational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table II
Inhibiting Factors

- Different Interests
- Different Values
- Cultural Differences
- Unlikely
- Unwise
- Disinterested
- Untrustworthy
- Lacking Genuineness
- Lacking Warmth
- Lacking Acceptance
- Lacking Understanding
- Group vs. Individual
- Vulnerable
Categorical Indicators

In order to demonstrate the nature of the indicators placed in the different categories, a list of the categories and the indicators placed within each is provided. Both facilitating and inhibiting indicators are included.

Facilitating Indicators Placed
in the Categories of PERSONAL QUALITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>- Showed confidence in discloser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target said encouraging words to discloser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable/Attractive</td>
<td>- Target told jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target looked attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>- Target maintained confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>- Target said he/she respected discloser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target behaved with respect toward people generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectable</td>
<td>- Target had reputation of respectability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Discloser perceived target to have integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in relationships, decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>- Target quiet so appeared interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target used direct eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target told discloser of his interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target asked question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target made comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target flirted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Caring     | - Target moved closer  
|            | - Target looked interested  
|            | - Target appeared interested  
|            | - Target appeared to listen  
|            | - Target friendly           
|            | - Target warm               
|            | - Target kind/hospitable    
|            | - Target gentle/gentle voice  
|            | - Target approachable       
|            | - Target sensitive/on verge of tears  
|            | - Target smiles a lot       
|            | - Target appeared caring    
|            | - Target like a sister      
|            | - Target patient, not pushy  
|            | - Target like a father      
|            | - Target used touch         
|            | - Target said caring things |
| Competent  | - Target seems competent     
|            | - Target strong in dealing with problems  
|            | - Target intelligent/ has clarity of mind  
|            | - Target experienced/seems wise in decision-making  
<p>|            | - Target in one of these positions:  counsellor, minister, doctor, official |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>- Target skillful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target had feminist attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target appeared to be understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target listened well and understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target did not use platitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target did not ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target did not give advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target did not intellectualize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target understood discloser's need for silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target could communicate on feelings level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting</td>
<td>- Target accepting of discloser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target nonjudgmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target undemanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target uncritical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine</td>
<td>- Target did not &quot;act professional&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target humble about talents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target appeared self-accepting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target open about self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target open body movements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Facilitating Indicators
Placed in the Categories of SITUATIONAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
<td>- Target demonstrated need to talk by various behavioural signs, such as speaking faster than usual, or being more withdrawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>- Target was present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>- Timing of target being present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position of Power</td>
<td>- Target in position of power over discloser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual vs. Group</td>
<td>- Target alone rather than in group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Facilitating Indicators
Placed in the Categories of PERCEIVED COMMONALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similar Personality</td>
<td>- Target appeared to have a similar personality to discloser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Values</td>
<td>- Target behaved as though she had similar values, beliefs, attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target belonged to same church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>- Target was same sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Similarities</td>
<td>- Target belonged to same culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar Experiences</td>
<td>- Target had had similar life experiences: age, family, job, marital status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target had attended same workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Interests</td>
<td>- Target appeared to have similar interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Knowledge</td>
<td>- Target had prior knowledge of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inhibiting Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed in the Categories of PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrustworthy</td>
<td>- Looked as though target would not maintain confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target appeared untrustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwise</td>
<td>- Target behaved unreasonably in business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking Genuineness</td>
<td>- Target non self-disclosing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target insincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target &quot;acted&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target behaved ambiguously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking Warmth</td>
<td>- Target moved away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target unwelcoming, brusque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target does not enjoy touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinterested</td>
<td>- Target did not ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target looked bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target did not listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespectful</td>
<td>- Target behaved patronizingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target dismissed discloser's opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking Acceptance</td>
<td>- Target appeared to be judgmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking Understanding</td>
<td>- Target unperceptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target misinterpreted discloser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target asked too direct questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikeable</td>
<td>- Unattractive appearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inhibiting Indicators
Placed in the SITUATIONAL Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
<td>- Target already appeared preoccupied or burdened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group vs. Individual</td>
<td>- Target was in group, not alone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inhibiting Indicators
Placed in the PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different Interests</td>
<td>- Target talked about different things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Values</td>
<td>- Target behaved as though she had different values, e.g., stealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Differences</td>
<td>- Target had different beliefs, attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target belonged to a different culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VI

Discussion

Statement of Results

The results of the present study suggest that while people state their reasons for self-disclosing, or inhibiting self-disclosure, with a wide variety of factors, in essence many of the influences cited as affecting self-disclosure, are in fact indicators of meaning rather than potent agents in themselves. The subjects were found to respond on a level of perceived meaning. That subjects had responded on a level of perceived meaning, was a conclusion arrived at only by a gradual and uncertain process of experimentation. Probing for indicators beyond the level of perceived meaning, resulted in an increasingly unwieldy number of groups of factors covering endless behaviours and acts. As a consequence of this, the universality of the concept of perceived meaning became evident.

Three major superordinate categories emerged. By far the largest category of the three was that of PERSONAL QUALITIES which covered factors relating to the various aspects of the personality of the target, which were seen to facilitate or hinder self-disclosure on the part of the subject. PERCEIVED COMMONALITY in the case of facilitating factors, and it's opposite, PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES in the case of inhibiting factors, were used as a single category to enfold those factors pertaining to the relationship between target and discloser. Thirdly, the term SITUATIONAL was used to include factors appearing to be circum-
stantial in nature and only co-incidentally related to target or the discloser.

Subcategories were formed within each of the three major superordinate categories. It was at this stage that those factors termed here, indicators of meaning, such as eye contact, were channeled into subcategories of perceived meaning, such as Interest. By this process, the overwhelming mass of variables affecting self-disclosure was streamlined into a consistent core of meaning.

**Limits of the Study**

The generalizability of the results is affected by the number of subjects who participated in the study. Since, the group of subjects was limited in number to twenty-five, then this should be considered when interpretations of the results are made.

The results can only be generalized to attenders of Unitarian churches.

The results are also confined to the outer reaches of the subjects' awareness. It appeared, according to the observations of the interviewer and the comments of the subjects themselves, that subjects' self-awareness, on what affects their self-disclosure, grew throughout the interview. Since the interviews on average lasted one hour, then self-awareness and indirectly time, must have set limits on the results of the study.

It is also of interest to note that of the twenty-five volunteer subjects, twenty were female. To make generalizations about sex differences from these results is rather difficult because of this male/female ratio.
Significance

The importance of the concept of perceived meaning as uncovered by this study, appears to rest in its power as an instrument of organization. As has been seen in the present study, many factors were assimilated, reduced and reformulated into three major categories by the use of this concept.

With reference to the chaotic list of factors outlined in the literature review, perceived meaning shows potential for organizing the previous research which, large in volume, is in desperate need of integration. From the research, the list of factors including the familiar indicators of meaning: voice quality, eye contact, touch, body language, sex, race, and religious status, could all be channeled into one of the three categories of PERSONAL QUALITIES, SITUATIONAL, or PERCEIVED COMMONALITY or PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES, depending on which best represented the meaning behind any given factor.

Perceived meaning as an organizer seems to offer a dependability not evidenced in the unreliable indicators of meaning. The illustration used earlier of the indicator "sex" which on the one hand implies caring to the person in need of a father figure, and on the other, understanding to the person who wants someone to identify with them, demonstrated how the same indicators are used to carry different meanings for different individuals. It looks as though indicators are used as means toward an end, and that perceived meaning can be seen as the end itself.
The categories PERSONAL QUALITIES and PERCEIVED COMMONALITY share between them a promise of relationship between the target and the dis­closer. The personal qualities, similar to those core conditions of Rogers, presented most often by subjects, are surely those that people attribute to one another when involved in intimate relationships. The use of these categories with their promise of bonding between people, seem to make sense as ways of structuring the reasons why people self-disclose.

Most of the factors listed under the PERSONAL QUALITIES category, coincide with the core conditions of genuineness, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. However, qualities were brought forth in this study that go beyond the scope of Rogers' core conditions. The Competent category, which comprises the qualities of intelligence, objectivity and skillfulness is one example of qualities not specified in Rogers' conditions. Likeable is another factor suggesting that this categorization system is broader than that of the core conditions. This is not to say that the qualities of competency and likeableness are not implied in Rogers' core conditions. It is suggested here, however, that their importance is great enough for their existence amongst the core conditions not to be assumed. It is hard to imagine, for example, an accepting and genuine counsellor eliciting self-disclosure from his client if he is incompetent to the extent that he understands only a small portion of what the client says.

Evidence of the reciprocity hypothesis is present in the categories. What Jourard terms the "dyadic effect" is particularly
dominant in the Genuine category where self-disclosure on the part of the target, was frequently considered by the discloser as a factor in his disclosure. Mutuality in the demonstration of qualities of respectfulness, caring, trustworthiness, understanding, and likeability, were all frequently mentioned. Often subjects expressed a lack of awareness of "who started it," but acknowledgement of the process was quite definite. No evidence of reciprocity was present in the Supportive, Competent, and Accepting categories, suggesting that the reciprocity effect plays a role in eliciting self-disclosure as far as some personal qualities are concerned, but not others. Some categories, such as Competent are not necessarily given to reciprocity, and may not be conditions for self-disclosure to take place.

As indicated earlier, that more females than males volunteered as participants in the study may be of some significance. This may be evidence to support those findings that females show more willingness to self-disclose than males. However, examination of the content of the self-disclosures of male and female subjects in this study did not uncover significant differences in either the choice of topic, or the apparent depth of self-disclosure. Both males and females generally produced incidents which contained information about their own feelings toward the target, or an intimate other. While some subjects intellectualized more than others, and did not own their feelings as much, this applied to both sexes. In some instances, males appeared to self-disclose much more intimately than females, and vice versa. The male subjects all reported incidents in which they had self-disc-
closed to females. This may relate in some way to the studies which find that males prefer disclosing to feminine counsellors, regardless of sex. Females on the other hand reported self-disclosures to both males and females.

Practical and Theoretical Significance

It is clear that the core conditions of genuineness, empathy, and positive regard outlined by Rogers, are reflected in these results. The importance of these qualities in the personalities of counsellors using a "client centred" approach has been established. The importance of these qualities in the personalities of all counsellors who see self-disclosure as part of the therapeutic process is emphasized by these results.

The apparent importance of the concept of perceived meaning, as found in this study, suggests a potential danger in the teaching of certain behaviours in counselling training programs, such as that of the Egan model (1975). People have attributed the quality of interest, for instance, to such behaviours as "facing the other squarely," "maintaining good eye contact," "maintaining an 'open' posture," "leaning toward the other," and "remaining relatively relaxed," all of which behaviours are advocated by Egan (1975), as being "postures of involvement" that interactants should adopt with one another. Surely they have done so because they have found these behaviours good indicators of the quality of interest. If we teach people merely the "indicators of meaning," and do not facilitate the development of the meaningful qualities within them, then in essence we will be teaching them to act
in an insincere way, and will render the counselling process a sham. The quality of genuineness considered so important will be missing. It would seem important for trainers of counsellors to ensure that the core qualities are present in the trainee first, and then the factors termed here as "indicators of meaning" could be used to help the trainee demonstrate his true feelings and qualities to the client.

A restrictive focus on the teaching of indicators might also detract from the flexibility that exists in people in their expression of personal qualities. A person possessing the quality of interest, for example, distinguishes himself from other interested individuals by his modes of expression. This person's unique ways of showing his interest are a part of his personality, and as such deserve room for freedom of expression. Two student counsellors, for instance, may be equally interested in a given client, but might convey their interest differently. One might lean forwards, look directly at the client and appear to listen, while the other might look away and be absorbed in processing what the client has just said. Both sets of behaviours are for each counsellor respectively, natural indicators of their interest. If these counsellors were trained to conform to a restricted repertoire of behaviours to express their qualities, then the possibility exists that their counselling style might appear contrived. Instead, what training programs could do to facilitate the expression of personal qualities such as genuineness, would be to encourage self-awareness in trainees of their natural indicators.
Furthermore, although certain indicators, such as eye contact, are effective conveyances of personal qualities for some clients, they may not be appropriate for all. Cultural differences challenge many of our indicators of meaning. Within our own culture though, the use of only a few sanctioned behavioural indicators could have the opposite of the desired effect. Where for many clients direct eye contact and speech on the part of the counsellor might convey interest, for a shy or distrustful and frightened client this might stimulate withdrawal. A flexibility component in the training of indicators of qualities in counselling trainees seems essential, for justice to be done to the personalities of the counsellors, and to enable them to relate to a broader range of clients.

Lastly, as demonstrated above, the concept of perceived meaning has been used in this study to integrate many varied factors. It has been suggested that the same method of analysis could be applied to integrate the diverse and seemingly unrelated research that has been done to date, and perhaps to organize future work.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Since results are only generalizable to attenders of Unitarian churches, it would be important to do an exploratory study of this nature on other populations. The results presented here could be compared with those of such groups as other spiritual, philosophical or religious denominations, or groups of clients or counsellors. Cultural similarities or differences were a significant component in these results and in the literature, and future research would do well to draw
from a different race and culture than the caucasian North American subjects used in this study.

As has been pointed out, despite the small number of subjects used here, the results show promise of any number of indicators being seen by people as affecting their self-disclosure. It would seem valuable to continue a research study of this nature in order to obtain a greater knowledge of just what this large spectrum of factors affecting self-disclosure entails.

Conversely, each of the factors in themselves invite questions regarding what it is more specifically about them that suggests so much meaning to the discloser. Much research has been done on self-disclosure itself as a factor, such that Jourard has developed the term the "dyadic effect" which is well accepted. Although much has been done, studies on the differences in self-disclosing behaviour between the sexes are needed. For example, it appears clear from the literature that in the North American Caucasian culture, females disclose more than males. However, if this is an oversimplification of what happens, we need to be more sure. It could be that self-disclosure for both females and males is context specific, and about this we know little. Generalizations regarding sex differences in this study are next to impossible. Questions which arise for future research would be whether in fact males choose different topics of self-disclosure, and whether amount and depth of self-disclosure differs for men and women.

Also, many subjects referred to "the appearance" of their targets as conveying the personal qualities so encouraging to the process, or
otherwise, of self-disclosure. What are some basic underlying features of body language, voice quality, physical distance, or race, that convey the qualities of genuineness, caring or insincerity to the discloser?

Summary

An overwhelming number of factors have emerged in this study and in the literature which are seen to affect self-disclosure. This study attempted to identify these factors, and render them meaningful by way of organization. Subjects appeared to respond on the basis of perceived meaning which became the basic premise upon which the categorization process was built. The differentiation of factors which were meaningful in themselves from those that were mere indicators of meaning, resulted in the emergence of three major categories: PERSONAL QUALITIES, PERCEIVED COMMONALITY or PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES, and SITUATIONAL. By placing each factor into whichever of the above categories was most appropriate, a picture of the factors most influential in affecting self-disclosure emerged. It became evident from the study that the concept of perceived meaning is a very valuable tool with which to sort the disorganized mass of data relating to what affects self-disclosure, and these results provide positive implications for the use of this method of analysis with past and future research.


Dear Members and Friends of the Unitarian Church:

I wish to make a study of the subject of self-disclosure for my Master's, by finding out what facilitates and inhibits people from saying more about themselves to another than they might ordinarily do. I plan to conduct the study by means of individual interviews of approximately sixty minutes, at the church, and am in need of volunteers from the age of eighteen years and upward, who would be willing to participate as interviewees.

Your participation would be entirely voluntary and you could, of course, withdraw from the study at any time you might wish. Confidentiality will be preserved by depersonalization of the information. All participants will receive a summary of findings when the study is completed.

It is hoped that the information gained from the study will ultimately benefit the practice of counselling, by increasing counsellors' awareness of what helps people to self-disclose and become more aware of themselves.

If you are willing to act as a participant, I shall be available to talk with you after the church services on October 10th and 24th. Also, my phone numbers are ___________ (home) and ___________ (business).

Sincerely,

Fiona Old
Subject Consent Form

I wish to study the subject of self-disclosure, and to find out by means of this study what facilitates and inhibits a person in self-disclosing to another. Further information about self-disclosure will be of benefit to counsellors in their training and practice. Your participation in this study may bring you increased self-awareness about your own self-disclosure. You will be interviewed for thirty to sixty minutes. You will be asked to answer open-ended questions about when in the past you have chosen to self-disclose or not, to another person. Your answers will be tape recorded, and when depersonalized notes have been extracted, the tapes will be destroyed. You are reminded that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that you may withdraw or refuse to answer any questions at any time without prejudice.

Signature: ____________________________
### Facilitating Factors and Their Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitating Factors</th>
<th>Factor Frequency</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Superordinate Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showed confidence in discloser</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive features such as humour and appearance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Likeable</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual trust and confidentiality respected</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaved with respect towards discloser and others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of respectability</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Respectable</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeared interested</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showed caring</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeared competent</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showed understanding</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seemed accepting</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Accepting</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincere, self-disclosing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Genuine</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeared vulnerable</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target present</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of target</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful position of target</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Position of power</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating Factors</td>
<td>Factor Frequency</td>
<td>Subcategory</td>
<td>Superordinate Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target alone rather than in group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual vs. Group</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar personality of target</td>
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<td>Similar Personality</td>
<td>PERCEIVED COMMONALITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Similar values</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Similar Values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Similarity of sex</td>
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<td>Sex</td>
<td>PERCEIVED COMMONALITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural similarities</td>
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<td>Cultural Similarities</td>
<td>PERCEIVED COMMONALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar experiences, e.g., life/workshop</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Similar Experiences</td>
<td>PERCEIVED COMMONALITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Similar interests</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shared Interests</td>
<td>PERCEIVED COMMONALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior knowledge of topic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Shared Knowledge</td>
<td>PERCEIVED COMMONALITY</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Total Facilitating Factors - 372
### Inhibiting Factors and Their Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inhibiting Factors</th>
<th>Factor Frequency</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Superordinate Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appeared untrustworthy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Untrustworthy</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour lacking in wisdom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unwise</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insincere, ambiguous behaviour</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lacking Genuineness</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brusque, unwelcoming</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lacking Warmth</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeared disinterested</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Disinterested</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaved disrespectfully</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Disrespectful</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgmental behaviour</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Lacking Acceptance</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking perception and ability to understand</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lacking Understanding</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattractive appearance and behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unlikeable</td>
<td>PERSONAL QUALITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target vulnerable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target in group not alone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Group vs. Individual</td>
<td>SITUATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeared to have different interests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Different Interests</td>
<td>PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeared to have different values</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Different Values</td>
<td>PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belonged to different culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cultural Differences</td>
<td>PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES</td>
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Total Inhibiting Factors - 147