A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF COUNSELLING AND COACHING:
IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS AND COACHES

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ABSTRACT
This research examined how five individuals with a Masters degree in counselling psychology and a certificate in coaching experienced their training and professional roles. Audio-taped in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. Using Osborne’s (1990) method of data analysis, unique and common themes were extracted. Themes indicate that the student counsellor experience was exciting and emotionally challenging; was enhanced by relationships with colleagues, professors and supervisors; was impacted by clients; and was predictive of future work as professional counsellors. Participants identified four fundamental differences between coaching and counselling. First, training to become a counsellor was different than training to become a coach. Second, coaching and counselling was experienced as being two distinctive models for creating change in the lives of people. Third, participants experienced a difference in the philosophical stance taken by the two models. Forth, the counsellor-client relationship was inherently different from the coach-client relationship. Similarities experienced between coaching and counselling were to a certain extent, reflective of the participant’s counselling theoretical orientation prior to becoming a coach and the participant’s focus when conducting a type of coaching called process coaching. Previous training and experience as counsellors was useful for the training and practice as coaches, but not necessarily a prerequisite. Areas of concern regarding the practice of coaching included client confidentiality, coach training and supervision, coaching scope of practice, and licensing. Both counselling and coaching were experienced as being “powerful,” “valuable,” and “personally fulfilling” models for creating positive change in the lives of people.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Historically, the establishment of a clear professional identity for counsellors (Hiebert, Simpson, & Uhlemann, 1992; Kwiatkowski, 1998; Smith & Drodge, 2001) and for coaches (Berglas, 2002; Hart, Blattner & Leipsic, 2001) has been challenging. Just as counsellors have struggled to define their professional role and distinguish the counselling psychology field from clinical psychology and/or psychotherapy (Hiebert et al., 1992; Kwiatkowski, 1998; Smith et al., 2001), coaches have attempted to clarify how their professional role and the field of coaching is different from other professions, such as counselling (Berglas, 2002; Hart et al., 2001).

Currently, counselling is a well-established profession and has completed “its first 100 years” of development (Hollis, 1997, p. 8). Since the early 1900’s, the profession of counselling has established thousands of counsellor training programs (Hollis, 1997), numerous accreditation bodies (Hollis, 1997), many professional counselling associations (Brown & Srebalus, 2003), a rich collection of counselling related literature and research (Brown & Srebalus, 2003), and a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (Brown & Srebalus, 2003). In comparison, coaching is a relatively young and less established profession. In 1992, a non-profit professional association for coaches was established called the International Coach Federation (ICF). Since then, the ICF has created an accrediting process for coach training schools and individual coaches. Most recently, the ICF established a Code of Ethics for its members. Despite a growing emphasis on accreditation, professional membership, research, and ethics, the coaching profession currently remains unregulated.

For the purpose of this research, several definitions are offered. Counselling psychology has been defined as a specialization within the broad field of psychology (Kennedy, 1998). According to the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology,
and Special Education at the University of British Columbia, counselling psychology is “defined by the study of how individuals adjust to problematic events and accomplish life tasks within major spheres of living such as work, education, relationships, family and recreation” (Mission statement, 2003).

According to the American Counselling Association (ACA), “the world’s largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings” (Inside ACA, 2003) the term professional counsellor is used to “represent those persons who have earned a minimum of a master’s degree and possess professional knowledge and demonstrable skills in the application of mental health, psychological, and human development principles in order to facilitate human development and adjustment throughout the life span” (Counsellor licensure legislation, 2003).

As described in greater detail by the British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors, registered clinical counsellors work within “an association approved scope of practice and offer a variety of educational and mental health related services for individuals, couples, families and groups. Examples include brief / long term counselling / therapy, psychoeducational programs, vocational or career testing and counselling, organizational consulting, training, and development, facilitation and mediation, clinical teaching and supervision, employee / family assistance program management, consulting and delivery, community response and critical incident / crisis” (British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors, 2003). Examples of concerns / issues that clinical counsellors work with include “grief and bereavement, substance abuse, personal growth and self development, sexual abuse / trauma, depression, panic / anxiety, anger, childhood and adolescent issues, cross-cultural issues, sexuality, communication skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution, stress management, life transitions, obsessive / compulsive behavior” (British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors, 2003).
The American Counseling Association consists of 18 divisions designed to enhance professional counsellor identity and represent specific interest and practice areas of nearly 52,000 members (Inside ACA, 2003). These divisions are: Association for Assessment in Counselling, Association for Adult Development and Aging, the American College Counseling Association, Association for Counselors and Educators in Government, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, Association for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues in Counseling, Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, American Mental Health Counselors Association, American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, American School Counselor Association, Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling, Association for Specialists in Group Work, Counseling Association for Humanistic Education and Development, Counselors for Social Justice, International Association of Addiction and Offender Counselors, International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, National Career Development Association, and National Employment Counseling Association (Divisions of the ACA, 2003).

In comparison to the counselling profession, coaching is a relatively new and rapidly growing field of human performance enhancement (Hall, Otazo & Hollenbeck, 1999). According to the University of Sydney, coaching is a new branch of psychology that is situated at an intersection of counselling, sport, and organisational psychology (PsychCoach, 2001). The notion of "coaching" in the world of sports and athletics is familiar to most people. A sports coach helps athletes and teams reach their potential by focusing on performance enhancement. Similar to sports coaching, coaching psychology is concerned with the enhancement of human performance. Coaching psychology, however, extends the metaphor into non-sport related areas of people's professional and personal lives.

Over the past ten years, contemporary coaching has become concerned with fostering change and transformation in individuals or organizations (Hudson, 1999; Whitmore, 1996).
Central to coaching is the belief that humans have an innate ability to change and that transformation is facilitated within the context of a relationship (Evered & Selman, 1990). Coaching is concerned with the facilitation of the learning process, enabling the client to manage change, foster growth, and develop more successful ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving (PsychCoach, 2001).

In general, the profession of coaching can be divided into two speciality areas, namely corporate coaching and personal coaching (Whitmore, 1996). Corporate coaches are typically hired by a corporation, organisation, and/or an executive to help create change and facilitate transformation in the workplace. Topics a corporate coach may address include interpersonal and communication skills, time management, strategic business planning, conflict resolution, customer service and increasing profit and productivity experience (Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 1998). Personal coaches, on the other hand, are typically hired by individuals who are searching for personal fulfilment, life balance, and an enhanced life experience (Whitworth et al., 1998). Depending on the coaches’ training and previous work experience, personal coaches help individuals succeed in a variety of areas including starting a business, career development and transition, personal finances, health, work / life balance, and relationships (Whitworth et al., 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the extensive developmental history of counselling as a profession and an increased emphasis on certification, accreditation and professional membership in the coaching industry, the titles “counsellor” and “coach” remain unprotected occupational titles. Furthermore, the coaching industry remains unregulated and in search of professional distinction. Such a distinction, however, may be difficult to obtain given a lack of empirical research conducted in the coaching field at large and no research to date comparing personal counselling with personal life coaching.
Rationale for the Study

The significance of this research is fourfold. First, if coaching is to achieve recognition as a distinct profession, further research on the similarities and differences between coaching and counselling is required. Second, as the popularity of coaching is growing and there is often a negative connotation associated with going to a counsellor (Richard, 1999), there is an increasing likelihood that dysfunctional or mentally ill clients may seek the services of a coach. As there are significant differences in the training, supervision, and academic standards of counselling graduate degree programs in comparison to coaching certificate / diploma programs, and an arguable overlap between the client issues addressed by both counsellors and personal coaches, some counsellors are concerned that coaches may not recognize, may downplay, or could unknowingly cause further trauma to deep-seated psychological problems due to a lack of psychological training and assessment skills (Berglas, 2002). Further research on the similarities and differences between coaching and counselling may help to distinguish the type of clients and kind of presenting issues that would be appropriate for a coach, or conversely, more suitable for a counsellor. Third, as coaching is rapidly emerging as both a profitable and popular service, this research may be of interest to counsellors who are considering becoming coaches themselves or are interested in integrating coaching into their existing counselling practices. Finally, the results of this study may contribute to theoretical and applied knowledge that both coaches and counsellors could utilize to further their respective practices.

Research Question

The time is thus ripe to explore personal coaching and counselling. The present study used a phenomenological approach in an attempt to answer the research question, “How do individuals with a Masters degree in counselling psychology and a certificate in coaching experience their training and professional roles?”
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The challenge of this literature review is to offer an initial comparison of personal coaching and personal counselling. First, a brief history of counselling will be provided. Second, the student counsellor experience, the professional identity of counsellors, and the predicted future of the counselling profession will be discussed. Third, a brief history of coaching will be reviewed. Fourth, the coaching experience from the client perspective will be presented. Finally, a comparison of training, accreditation, professional structures, and the practice of counselling and coaching will be offered.

A Brief History of Counselling

Because of the diversity within the counselling profession, no single historical starting point can be identified (Brown & Srebalus, 2003). Instead, the counselling profession arose in a time period that "encompasses the years just before and after the start of the twentieth century" (Hollis, 1997, p.3) as an "organized response to the need for guidance in a changing social context characterized by immigration, industrialization, and migration from rural areas to cities" (Mission statement, 2003).

During the nineteenth century, the American Civil War "accelerated the industrial movement, specialization in the work force, and awareness of the need for vocational education and guidance" (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 3). In addition to the growing emphasis on career guidance, "other developments were happening in psychology that would lay the groundwork for counseling" (Myrick, 1993, p. 5). For example, the impetus for scientific psychology in the United States began with the establishment of the first psychological laboratory in Germany by Wilhelm Wundt in 1879 and the first psychology laboratory devoted to the study of children established by Stanley Hall in 1883 (Brown & Srebalus, 2003). In 1890, Sigmund Freud began treating mental patients with
psychoanalysis, "which along with Pavlovian psychology in Russia and Gestalt psychology in Germany would provide the impetus for many current theories of human behavior" (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 3).

During the early twentieth century, pioneers such as Frank Parsons, Eli Weaver, and Jesse Davis were introducing vocational guidance programs in schools. These men were "primarily concerned with matching young people to jobs and preparing them for the world of work" (Myrick, 1993, p. 6), and have been identified as the founders of the school guidance movement in the United States (Myrick, 1993; Brown & Srebalus, 2003). Their work spawned numerous guidance programs throughout the United States and created an impetus for improving vocational guidance (Brown & Srebalus, 2003). In 1910, "the First National Conference on Vocational Guidance was convened in Boston" (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 4) and three years later, "the National Vocational Guidance Association was formed as the first professional organization for counselors" (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 4). In 1915, the NVGA published its first journal, the *Vocational Guidance Bulletin*, "which was the forerunner of today's *Career Development Quarterly*" (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 4).

During World War I and into the 1920s, tests were produced to measure human traits within schools, industry, and the military (Brown & Srebalus, 2003; Myrick, 1993). The Great Depression would result in an even greater emphasis on assessing worker skills and aptitudes (Myrick, 1993). As in World War I, tests were used in World War II "to screen and place draftees" (Myrick, 1993, p. 6). As the use of tests, personality inventories, and psychological counselling became a routine part of the military, "they soon found their place in high school guidance programs" (Myrick, 1993, p. 6).

During the forties and fifties, Carol Roger's publications on client-centered counselling propelled the transition of the counselling profession from a group that focused on testing and guidance services to a group that provided counselling services (Brown &
Srebalus, 2003, p. 5). Roger’s emphasis on humanism and a non-directive counselling approach was well received by counsellors because of “its positive nature and its departure from the medical model that characterized people with problems as medically ill” (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p.5). In addition to Roger’s work, a whole new set of theoretical constructs were developed that would underpin the work of many counsellors. For example, in the 1950s Albert Ellis developed rational-emotive therapy and William Glasser introduced reality therapy (Brown & Srebalus, 2003). Behavioural counselling became more known to counsellors through the work of John D. Krumboltz (Brown & Srebalus, 2003). Career choice and career development also received much attention from theorists such as Super, Roe, Holland, Tiedemann and O’Hara (Brown & Srebalus, 2003).

Although theorizing contributed to the growth of the counselling profession in the forties, fifties, and sixties, it was the development of professional counselling structures that had the greatest influence. In 1951, “after nearly twenty years of collaborative efforts, the National Vocational Guidance Association and the American College Personnel Association voted to merge under an umbrella organization, the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA)” (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p.5). After the formation of the APGA, scholarly journals were added, standards for counsellor preparation were publicized, a code of ethics was proposed in *The Personnel and Guidance Journal* in 1959, and the profession began to seek legislation that supported its goals (Brown & Srebalus, 2003).

The 1957 launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik catapulted the development of the counselling profession (Myrick, 1993). Stunned by the scientific and technological achievements of the Soviet Union that the Sputnik represented, the American congress responded immediately by passing a landmark piece of legislation – the National Defence Education Act of 1958 (Brown & Srebalus, 2003). Money was now spent on supporting school counselling programs and the training of counsellors which resulted in “a rapid
expansion of secondary school counselling programs and a parallel increase in both the number and size of training programs” (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 6).

During the 1960s, the counselling profession continued to evolve along side the social revolution (Blocher, 2000). The responsibility for identifying, treating, and preventing mental health problems was transferred out of psychiatric clinics and mental hospitals and into the community (Blocher, 2000). Community mental health centres began to promote the view that psychological dysfunction could be understood as being maladaptive responses to situational problems, rather than a result of personality defects (Blocher, 2000). In accordance with this philosophy, community counsellors set out to help people solve practical problems of everyday living (Blocher, 2000).

By the 1980s, the profession of counselling expanded considerably to incorporate a wide variety of developmental, remedial, and preventive counselling services to help clients across the life span (Blocher, 2000). Counsellors were working not only in traditional school settings, but were also employed at rehabilitative settings, family services, corrections, alcohol and drug agencies, and employee assistance programs (Smith & Drodge, 2001). As the professional role of counsellor continued to diversify throughout the 80s and 90s, several authors have noted a trend towards remedial counselling and a reduced involvement in developmental and preventative counselling (Hiebert, Simpson, & Uhlemann, 1992; Smith & Drodge, 2001). Hiebert et al., (1992) suggested that the movement towards remediation occurred in part due to the opportunity for counselling agencies and private practice counsellors to receive third party reimbursements. Finally, according to the Department of Education and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education at the University of British Columbia, as the pace of change in society continues to accelerate, “requiring individuals and families to make more complicated and difficult adjustments to conditions of life in a
pluralistic society”, the demand for counselling services “continues to grow” (Mission statement, 2003).

The Student Counsellor Experience

Truell (2001) conducted a study in order to examine the negative and stressful aspects of learning counselling and to discover methods for reducing harm. According to Truell (2001), at the time of conducting the research, the amount of published material on the negative effects of learning counselling was sparse. Furthermore, Truell (2001) was unable to find any studies that sought the actual views of counselling trainees or recent graduates. Instead, Truell (2001) found that the available literature on the student counsellor experience tended to be based on the observations of supervisors and instructors. Thus, in order to learn more about the experience of learning counselling from the student’s perspective, Truell (2001) interviewed six people who had recently graduated from an UK university counselling program. An “in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviewing method for collecting data” (Truell, 2001, p.74) was employed. All of the participants (4 females and 2 males) were mature students aged between 25 and 45 years old. No other personal data was collected.

Four themes emerged from the data analysis. First, the research findings suggested that “counselling training can cause significant disruption in the trainee’s relationships with their friends and family” (Truell, 2001, p. 86). As described by Truell (2001), all of the participants had fewer friends after graduating from the counselling program, although this was not necessarily seen as being negative. All of the participants reported going through a process of relationship re-examination with family members. Five of the six participants had experienced difficulties in their relationships with their spouses while engaged in the counselling training program. Upon graduation, however, five of the six participants reported that they had better relationships than before they started the training.
Second, “learning counselling affected the trainee’s self-expectations” (Truell, 2001, p. 81). For example, as students, several participants had believed that “in order to be a good counsellor, they needed to have resolved all the conflicts in their own lives” (Truell, 2001, p. 81). Other expectations held by the participants included the belief that “they should be able to solve all of their clients’ problems” (Truell, 2001, p. 81) and “that they should acquire counselling skills with ease and perform them perfectly” (Truell, 2001, p. 81). All of the participants reported that these expectations caused them to have feelings of depression. Heightened anxiety, sadness and excessive crying, guilt, and feeling like a fraud were also reported.

Third, in addition to the stresses related to relationship change and unrealistic self-expectations, the participants also experienced a number of other difficulties including “difficulties in integrating the counselling skills, fear of harming the client, self-disclosure in the classroom, and questioning their own state of mental health” (Truell, 2001, p. 81). When asked what was the most stressful aspect of learning counselling, a typical answer from the participants was “not letting myself be free to be myself. I didn’t / don’t know how to be myself and be a counsellor” (Truell, 2001, p. 81).

Fourth, in Truell’s study, the results suggested that “counselling trainers [were] not addressing these issues effectively” (Truell, 2001, p. 86). All of the participants felt that the program structure, instruction of counselling skills, and teacher knowledge was good. However, all of the participants would have “preferred one-to-one contact on a regular basis with a non-marking tutor” (Truell, 2001, p. 83), “would have liked the tutors to have encouraged them to partake in personal counselling” (Truell, 2001, p. 84), would have liked supervision to have “focused on the stresses of learning counselling” (Truell, 2001, p. 85), and would have appreciated it if teachers had invited “classroom discussion on the common irrational beliefs of counselling trainees” (Truell, 2001, p. 85). Truell (2001) concluded with
a recommendation that an extra training component focussed on "the process of becoming a counsellor" (2001, p. 67) be included in existing counsellor training programs.

There were several limitations to this study. First, Truell (2001) focused solely on the negative aspects of learning counselling. If the study had focused on all of the changes that had occurred during the process of learning counselling, the negative aspects would have been placed in context. Second, as one may argue that a sample size of six participants does not adequately represent the student counsellor population, the study’s findings must be thought of as indications only. Finally, given that all participants were graduates from one UK university, it would be difficult to generalize the findings to other university counselling programs across the UK or to Canada and the United States.

Professional Identity of Counsellors

Other researchers, such as Hiebert and Uhlemann (1993) and Smith and Drodge (2001), have also conducted studies utilizing counselling program graduates as participants. For these researchers, the question of how graduate counsellors define and experience their professional roles was of interest. Upon reflection of the current diversity within the counselling profession, Hiebert, Simpson, & Uhlemann voiced their concern that the counselling profession has become so diverse that "counselling psychology is in the throes of an identity crisis" (1992, p. 201). To illustrate, Hiebert et al., (1992) pointed out that within universities, counselling is taught in a variety of faculties including education, educational psychology, psychology, counsellor education, and human development. According to Hiebert et al., (1992), there are more than 15 national professional associations who express stakeholder interest in career counselling. The researchers also claim that within the United States, one can find counselling sections or divisions within every major professional association affiliated with either psychology or education. Hiebert et al., (1992) argued that such diversity amongst professional and academic affiliation suggests that counsellors do not
have a clear identity. Even the name ‘counselling’ is not exclusive to ‘counsellors’, thereby, adding to the identity confusion of what it means to be a counsellor (Hiebert et al., 1992).

Hiebert and Uhlemann (1993) conducted a pilot study in order to determine the professional identity of Canadian counsellors. The open-ended questionnaire was given to all members of the Counsellor Educators Chapter of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association (CGCA) and the Counselling Psychology Section of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). Questions on the survey addressed areas such as definitions of counselling psychology, areas of practice, similarities and differences to other professions, future directions, professional affiliations, and basic demographics. The response rate was only 9%, thus the findings can only be understood as representing 23 counsellors, and not a representative sampling of the Canadian counselling profession.

The respondents either saw themselves as a counselling psychologist or a counsellor, but not both. Few identified themselves as a counsellor educator. In general, there was agreement amongst the respondents regarding the definition of counselling psychology. All three groups agreed that counselling psychology involved “working with normal (vs. pathological) clients, living in community (rather than institutional) settings, who were experiencing any number of developmental life issues or personal life crises” (Hiebert & Uhlemann, p. 291, 1993). The areas of practice identified by the respondents, however, did not match the definition. For example, the respondents indicated that the majority of their caseloads were remedial or rehabilitative in nature, rather than developmental or preventative. The researchers warned that such a trend leaves a door open for others to take over the counsellor’s traditional role of education and prevention, such as vocational and career counselling. Furthermore, Hiebert, Simpson, & Uhlemann argued that by focussing on remediation or “salvage” (1992, p. 204) operations, counsellors may be providing clients with
short-term solutions rather than developmental or educational skills that could produce long-
term change or prevent typical life demands from becoming problematic.

The Hiebert and Uhlemann (1993) study was limited by its small sample size. With a sample of only 23 Canadian counsellors, one may argue that the researchers' conclusions about the state and professional identity of counselling are tentative. With only a 9% participation return rate, it is quite possible that counsellors who would identify their work as being preventative and/or developmental were not represented in the given sample. It is difficult to judge whether or not a discrepancy exists between the definition and professional practice of counselling in Canada.

Results of a more recent poll of Canadian counsellors conducted by Smith and Drodge (2001), further supports a North American trend towards a diversification in the role of counsellors. Smith and Drodge (2001) surveyed graduates from the University of Ottawa's M.Ed. program in Educational Counselling in order to learn about their work settings, professional activities, clientele, and career satisfaction. The survey was comprised primarily of closed-ended questions requiring a “yes” or “no” answer or ratings on a 4 and 5-point scale. Open-ended questions were also included in order to reduce constraints on the kind and quantity of information the respondents provided. The participants were counsellors who had graduated from the university program during the years between 1990–1998. A survey package was mailed to 162 individuals with a 41% response rate (67 graduates returned the survey).

The researchers found that three-quarters of the counsellors sampled were working in settings other than schools. The most common alternative to schools for employment was community agencies. The counselling services offered at the community centres were as diverse as crisis intervention for victims of violence, to counselling for people with chronic mental and physical disabilities, to career counselling for immigrants. The survey also
revealed that the number of counsellors who found work in private practice was equal to the number of counsellors in school and community settings. A large portion of work in the private setting came from corporate Employment Assistance Programs out-sourced to private counselling firms. With respect to the specific work activities engaged in by counsellors, the survey data suggested that the professional role of counsellors was multifaceted. Personal counselling was the most common professional activity sited, followed by what were once central activities in traditional counselling: career counselling and academic advising. Within this secondary tier of counselling activities, clinical assessment including psychometric assessment, crisis intervention, and staff development and training were also reported.

Overall, the surveyed counsellors were quite satisfied with their jobs and career choices. However, the majority of counsellors, particularly those who worked in community settings, were dissatisfied with their wages. Several respondents were frustrated by the public image of the counselling profession and perceived themselves as having lower status and prestige relative to other mental health professionals such as social workers, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses. Unlike Hiebert, Simpson, and Uhlemann (1992) who perceived diversification within the counselling profession as being a threat to counsellors’ identity, researchers Smith and Drodge (2001) suggested that diversity represented an opportunity for counsellors to potentially break through barriers to higher salaries. Smith and Drodge (2001) concluded that diversification to the counselling professional would not only help counsellors to remain viable in an ever-changing marketplace, but that the foundational integrity of the counselling profession could remain flexibly in place.

When interpreting the results from the Smith and Drodge (2001) study, one must keep in mind that the sample of respondents was not randomly selected and it was a representation of a small population of counsellors working in Canada. Also, the validity of the survey as a measurement device was dependent on the thoroughness of the content domain analysis. The
questionnaire itself was not tested psychometrically. Thus, the survey provides readers with a rough sketch of the work engaged by Canadian counsellors during the 1990s.

The Future of Counselling

Turning away from current trends in counselling and towards the future, researchers Neimeyer and Diamond (2001) offered predictions for the counselling profession in the United States over the next 10 years. In order to explore counselling’s anticipated future, the researchers utilized a Delphi Poll. The Delphi Poll was used to obtain and collect the opinions of a group of experts to develop consensus regarding future developments in a specific field. The method involved two administrations of a questionnaire to each member of a panel, without allowing the experts on the panel to have face-to-face interaction. After panel members answered the poll, mean responses from all panel members were calculated, and the polls were returned to panel members along with the mean responses. Members were then asked to re-evaluate their answers in light of the group mean responses. The panel’s responses to the second polling became the final predictions. As declared by the researchers, the Delphi Poll was based on two assumptions: (1) that a group is better than an individual person in making predictions about the future and (2) if personal pressure and interpersonal influence within a group can be controlled, predictions will be more genuine and effective.

In the Neimeyer and Diamond (2001) study, the researchers constructed a Delphi Poll that consisted of 28-item survey concerning the future direction of counselling psychology core elements, research and training, and professional training. After construction, the poll was presented to 72 directors of training of the Council of Counselling Psychology Training Programs in the United States. In all, 37 directors agreed to participate in the first round of Delphi Polling and 31 of the original panel completed the second round of polling. The researchers described the gender distribution of their sample to be representative of the gender distribution found in the total population of training directors.
With respect to the future core of counselling, “commitment to issues of diversity” (Neimeyer & Diamond, 2001, p. 56) was nominated as most central to the identity of counselling psychology ten years from now. “A commitment to life-span development” (Neimeyer & Diamond, 2001, p. 56) and “identification with adjustment and preventative mental health models” (Neimeyer & Diamond, 2001, p. 56) took second and third place. The features that were predicted to be the least central to the future of counselling psychology were “vocational and career counselling” (Neimeyer & Diamond, 2001, p. 56) and “organizational management and administrative skills” (Neimeyer & Diamond, 2001, p. 56). With respect to the future of research in counselling, it was predicted that the greatest increase in attention would be placed on diverse and qualitative methodology. Neuropsychological assessment was predicted as receiving the greatest increase in future attention and personality assessment experiencing a decrease. Finally, the area identified as being the greatest area of focus for the future of professional training was “the number of required practicum hours in preparation for predoctoral internship” (Neimeyer & Diamond, 2001, p. 60).

In support of the Neimeyer and Diamond (2001) study, the researchers linked the predictions of the Delphi Poll to projections that had been reported in previous literature. Although Neimeyer and Diamond were surprised by the prediction that vocational and career counselling would be the least central to counselling psychology’s future, the researchers turned to past literature that echoed an historical ambivalence towards career counselling. Any conclusions made about the future of counselling from this study, however, must be limited to the responses obtained from a relatively small sample of respondents (43% return rate) and the type of questions asked on the Delphi Poll. Furthermore, as the participants in the study were all directors’ of counselling training programs, one may argue that the sample was not diverse enough to cast predictions for the counselling profession as a whole. Finally,
as the Delphi Poll was conducted in the United States, one cannot assume that the responses
would be representative of the future of the Canadian counselling profession.

A Brief History of Coaching

The origins of coaching can be traced back to the historical evolution of both sport
and business. Danish, Petitpas, and Hale defined sport psychology as “the use of sport to
enhance competence and promote human development throughout the life span” (1993, p.
358). According to Danish et al., (1993) sport psychologists were historically interested in
not only athletic development but also in the application of sport psychology principles to the
enhancement of other areas in life. Timothy Gallwey has received credit as being one of the
first to bring sport psychology ideas into the corporate boardrooms of North America
(Hudson, 1999; Whitmore, 1996). Gallwey (1975) wrote that if a coach was to focus more
on helping a player remove or reduce internal obstacles to performance, doing so would call
forth the player’s natural ability without the need for much technical instruction from the
coach. Currently, several authors and researchers in the field of life coaching (Evered &
Selman, 1990; Hudson, 1999; Whitmore, 1996) suggest that Gallwey’s ideas capture the
essence of what life coaching is about. For these writers, coaching helps people to maximize
their performance in life by enabling people to discover their own strengths, talents, and
capabilities for overcoming internal obstacles.

By the late 1970s, the corporate culture in North America was experiencing a shift in
the way business was conducted (Evered & Selman, 1990; Hall, Otazo & Hollenbeck, 1999;
Hudson, 1999). The 1960s and 1970s top-down hierarchical approach to large organization
planning was being replaced with the 1980s need for flexibility and collaboration (Hudson,
1999). Training and seminars on leadership, business performance, teamwork, and
empowerment became widespread (Hall et al., 1999). Consultants were utilized to work with
key executives and business systems (Hudson, 1999). By the late 1980s, the professional field of corporate coaching was born (Hudson, 1999).

As reviewed by Evered and Selman (1990), much of the literature on management coaching during the 1980s was focussed on translating sports coaching into techniques for business management. Evered and Selman (1990) argued, however, that coaching should no longer be seen as simply a tool or technique for improving operation efficiency or management skills. Instead, the authors suggested that coaching was a new management paradigm for empowering others. Recent literature on corporate coaching appears to be supportive of this argument. For example, articles now connect corporate coaching with career development (Levinson, 1996), management performance (Goodstone & Diamante, 1998), and prevention of executive burnout (Sperry, 1993).

By the early 1990s, coaching was concerned with not only fostering change and transformation in organizations but also in the personal lives of individuals (Hudson, 1999). Currently, one of the main distinctions made in the coaching profession is that of corporate coaching and personal life coaching (Withworth, Kimsey-House, Sandahl, 1998). Evered and Selman (1990) described the contemporary corporate / executive coach as a professional who works with an executive or business to transform the executive’s working and personal life and / or empower a business to exceed prior levels of performance. According to Hudson (1999), areas in which a corporate / executive coach may work include interpersonal and communication skills, strategic thinking and business planning customer relationship management strategies, time management, work / life balance, career development, staff training and conflict resolution, and leadership development. In comparison, Withworth et al., (1998) describe the personal life coach as being a professional who works with individuals to enhance their life experiences. Typical life coaching areas include improving
one's personal finances, social life, personal health, work/life balance, family relationships, interpersonal skills, and one's physical environment (Withworth et al., 1998).

In 1992 the International Coach Federation was established and originally incorporated as the National Association of Professional Coaches, Inc. According to the ICF, it is "the largest not-for-profit professional association worldwide of personal and business coaches with more than 6000 members with 140 chapters in 28 countries worldwide" (ICF, 2003). According to Peer Resources, "a non-profit educational corporation that specializes in peer, mentor, and coach systems," there are 136 coaching schools available throughout the world as of August, 2003 (Coaching training programs and schools, 2003). In general, coaching schools "offer training exclusively on coaching and typically deliver their educational or training program through a combination of intensive learning workshops, individual supervision, and telecourses" (Coaching training programs and schools, 2003).

Leaders in coach training have included Thomas J. Leonard who founded Coach University in 1992 and the founders of the Coach Training Institute, established in 1992 by Laura Whitworth, Karen Kimsey-House, and Henry Kimsey-House. To date, Coach University has trained over 7,000 coaches operating in 38 countries (Coach University, 2003) the Coaches Training Institute has trained over 10,000 coaches (CTI, 2003). More recently, The Institute for Life Coach Training was founded in 1998 by Dr. Patrick Williams, a psychologist turned coach. As proclaimed by Williams, The Institute for Life Coach Training is "the first-of-its-kind training institute that specializes in training psychotherapist, psychologists, counselors, and helping professionals in building a successful coaching practice" (Institute for Life Coach Training, 2003a). According to Williams, "therapists are the most well-positioned professionals to transition into coaching because they already have the requisite skills for effective coaching (such as listening, building rapport, encouraging, facilitating change, empathy and objectivity) that they can easily translate into coaching."
Therapists also possess built-in credentials because they already have Bachelor’s, Master’s or even Doctoral degrees in the mental health field – and when properly trained, stand to be the most results-producing life coaches anywhere” (Institute for Life Coach Training, 2003b).

In summary, “coaching has become the second fastest-growing industry in America” (Institute for Life Coach Training, 2003b). Although coaching is still most prevalent in the corporate environment, “individuals are increasingly turning to coaches for help in achieving excellence, improving relationships, overcoming challenges and enhancing all aspects of their lives (Institute for Life Coach Training, 2003b).

Coaching from the Client Perspective

One unpublished masters thesis (Dhaliwal, 2001) was conducted in order to examine the coaching experience from the client perspective. This qualitative thesis employed in-depth semi-structured interviews with six volunteer participants. The interviews were conducted in order to collect data rich in phenomenological reflections. Interviews were audio taped, transcribed verbatim and then analyzed for individual themes and themes common to the six participants. Participants in the study had been coached for a minimum of five months or at least 15 sessions. Two of the participants were told by their employment supervisors to participate in coaching in order to improve their work performance. The other four participants voluntarily sought out coaching for work related issues.

Several themes emerged from the data. With respect to the coaching relationship, participants described having a “strong interpersonal connection” (p. 97) with their coaches and experienced a “uniqueness of the coaching relationship” (p. 99). Responses typical of the participants included “I don’t have anybody else in my life that I can say, okay, this is how I feel. She’s rock that I know I can rely on;” “I can basically tell her anything, whether I’ve screwed up or not, I can expect a straight answer from her;” “not tied into my life emotionally;” “she provided some window of experience that I didn’t have from anybody
else, not even my own boss." Some of the participants described the coaching relationship as being “on the same level” (p. 99). For example, one participant explained that there was “no up or down, it’s on the same level. I’m not spoken down to. I don’t speak down to her. It’s respectful” (p. 99). Two participants identified “dual relationships” with their coaches. For example, for one participant, her coach was also her work colleague. Although the participant liked the fact that the coach knew about the participant’s work issues first hand and shared the same background, the participant found it “really kind of odd at first” (p. 99). The participant, however, was able to “make a mental shift” (p. 99) from colleagues to coach-client once the coaching boundaries were established. For another participant, the coaching relationship overtime became less formal and feelings of friendship emerged. For example, “I almost think of [my coach] as my friend. In fact, two or three weeks ago, she asked me if I was still getting value out of our coaching and I think that was her way of asking whether this was really a coaching session.” (p. 117).

With respect to “noticeable qualities and characteristics of coaches” (p. 107), two participants stated that having a coach who role modelled desired behaviours was important. For example, “I know that she’s succeed in her career, which I guess is something that I would like to emulate. I feel she’s a source of energy to keep me wanting to move in that direction;” “She also balances her life quite well [and] she absolutely practices what she preaches. I think that’s important.” Other words describing coaches’ qualities included “positive, source of strength, supportive, uplifted, non-judgmental, safe, flexible, open-minded, intellectual, unbiased, caring, logical, encouraging, strong boundaries, and challenging” (p. 108-109).

With respect to the practice of coaching, participants indicated that their coaches initially followed “a general coaching format” (p. 104) that became “less structured over time” (p. 104). During the coaching sessions, participants identified “several skills and
strategies used in the implementation of the coaching process" (p. 104) such as being challenged by coaches, coaches’ self-disclosures, being held accountable, coaches’ modelling of desired behaviours, receiving direct and indirect feedback, encouragement to look beyond current situations towards the future possibilities and goals, and coaches’ sharing of resources and expertise.

As a result of the coaching experience, participants noticed that “significant learning occurred and subsequent changes appeared in the cognitive and behavioural realms” (p. 108). For example, all of the participants developed new insights and perspectives about themselves, their colleagues, and in some cases, family members. All of the participants credited the coaching experience as being the impetus for shifting “their sources of validation from an external to an internal locus of control” (p. 109). Overall, all of the participants found their coaching experience to be positive. As participants stated, “I would definitely say my confidence is higher. I’m happier. I’m more content…I’m more grounded;” “I feel that I’m heading in a direction that is where I’m meant to be, and living life with passion;” “I feel a real connection to my spirit or who I am” (p. 110).

Dhaliwal’s (2001) research was limited in several ways. First, as all of the participants were recommended to the study by their coaches, it would appear that the results may have been positively biased. Second, given the small sample size of six participants, one cannot assume that the experiences described in the study are representative of coaching clientele at large. Third, as the relationship between the participants and their coaches was established in order to enhance the participant’s work experience, one may suggest that Dhaliwal’s (2001) study has helped to illuminate the corporate coaching experience from the client’s perspective. The experience of personal coaching from both the client’s and coach’s perspective, however, remains unknown.
A Comparison of Counselling and Coaching

Several differences are apparent when comparing counselling and coaching history, accreditation, training, and codes of ethics. First, counselling is a well-established profession with a developmental history of one hundred years (Hollis, 1997). In comparison, coaching is a relatively young and less established profession seeking greater distinction. As stated by the International Coach Federation, "it is the immediate goal of the ICF to take our organization to the next level and become a strong (and unified) voice for the coaching profession and provide ever increasing value for its members" (ICF, 2003).

Second, the counselling profession has more well-established independent training program accreditation bodies than the coaching profession. For example, credentialing of counsellors began in 1978 when the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) "established an independent training program accreditation body, now known as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)" (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 8). In comparison, accreditation in the coaching field is a relatively new endeavor. For example, although the ICF has developed an accreditation service for coach schools and a credentialing system for individual coaches, according to Peer Resources, accreditation in the coaching field "has a number of troubling aspects, including its lack of wide-spread acceptance, conflicts of interests between reviewers and some rated schools, minimal reporting of results, and questionable or vague criteria" (Coaching training programs and schools, 2003).

Third, the credentialing requirements to become a counsellor and a coach are different. For example, in order to become a member of the American Counseling Association (ACA) or the Canadian Counselling Association (CCA), individuals must complete a comprehensive post-graduate academic training program offered at an approved institution of higher education. In comparison, individuals who want to become members of
the International Coach Federation can meet the requirements for accreditation by obtaining a diploma or certificate from a variety of profit and non-profit coaching schools (ICF, 2003). Also, entrance into Masters degree counselling programs are restricted based on academic merit and personal suitability such as completion of an undergraduate university degree and pre-requisite courses, graduate record exam marks, and letters of reference (Hollis, 1997). Entrance into coaching school programs is typically open to anyone with interest and the financial resources to afford the training (Coaching training programs and schools, 2003).

For a counsellor training program to be eligible for review by CACREP, entry-level degree programs must have a minimum of 72 quarter hours or 38 semester hours of graduate studies. Mental Health Counselling and Marital, Couple, and Family Counselling/Therapy programs must have a minimum of 90 quarter hours or 60 semester hours of graduate studies. CACREP also stipulates that counselling programs must train students in eight common core areas: professional identity, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, helping relationships, group work, assessment, and research and program evaluation. In addition to course work, counselling programs are required to provide supervised training experiences, including practicum and internship for all students. For example, as described by Hollis, a person going through counsellor preparation today “not only must complete graduate course work in an approved institution of higher education, but also must have practiced under well-qualified supervisors in clinical settings” (1997, p. 4). According to Hollis, supervised “internship requirements are increasing and are approaching an average minimum of 600 clock hours for the entry level and 1,200 to 2,000 clock house for the doctoral level” (1997, p.4).

In comparison, the ICF does not stipulate common core areas of study or supervision requirements for becoming an accredited school or a certified coach. Instead, it focuses on the number of coach-specific training hours offered by schools and the number of client
contact hours accumulated by individual coach candidates. For example, in order to become accredited by the ICF, a candidate needs to demonstrate an accumulation of 60 coach-specific training hours and 250 client hours for the Associate Certified Coach (ACC) designation, 125 training hours and 750 client hours for the Professional Certified Coach (PCC) designation, and 200 training hours and 2500 client hours for the Master Certified Coach (MCC) designation.

Fourth, in recognition that “counsellor preparation is no longer confined to the academic graduate programs offered in colleges and universities” (Hollis, 1997, p. 8), Hollis explained that the determination of what constitutes adequate counsellor preparation “now rests in several well-established bodies” (1997, p. 8) in addition to the CACREP faculty. Such bodies include “program accreditation associations, State Boards that regulate the practice, national certification organizations, continuing education offerings, and liability insurance programs” (1997, p. 8). As of 2002, almost all of the American states have “active legislative programs aimed at securing licensing for counselors” (Brown & Srebalus, 2003, p. 8). In Canada, the counselling profession is currently not regulated by a statutory process except in the Province of Quebec. Currently, coaching remains unregulated and without licensing.

All members of the American Counselling Association (ACA) and the Canadian Counselling Association (CCA) must adhere to the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice as outlined by the respective associations. Both associations provide detailed ethical guidelines concerning the counselling relationship, confidentiality, professional responsibility, relationships with other professionals, evaluation, assessment and interpretation, teaching, training, and supervision, research and publication, and resolving ethical issues. In 2003, the ICF established a code of ethics and an ethical conduct review process for those who have ethical complaints against an ICF member or a credentialed
coach. The ICF’s code of ethics briefly outlines 16 standards of ethical conduct regarding professional conduct at large, professional conduct with clients, confidentiality / privacy, and conflicts of interest. When comparing the overall content of the codes of ethics, it is apparent that counsellors must uphold a greater number of ethical obligations than coaches. For example, a counsellor’s ethical obligation to “make every effort to avoid dual relationships with clients” (ACA code of ethics, 2003) is not mentioned in the ICF code of ethics.

In addition to the differences between counsellor and coach training, credentialing, and the historical development of professional structures such as ethical codes, several coaching authors have claimed that the practice of the two professions is different (Goodstone & Diamante, 1998; Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999; Hudson, 1999; Levinson, 1996; Richard, 1999; Sperry, 1993; Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998). For example, in a study by Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic (2001), therapists turned coaches were asked to describe from their own experience, the critical differences between therapy and coaching. The researchers interviewed by phone and in person 30 geographically dispersed participants who met the criteria of (a) holding a clinical master’s or doctoral degree and (b) having either an active or former practices in both coaching and therapy. Participants were asked seven questions and narrative summaries were produced in order to provide a perspective on the controversy of coaching versus therapy.

Participants identified between one and six critical differences including focus of attention, level of activity and type of conversation between themselves and their clients. With respect to focus of attention, participants described therapy as being focused on interpersonal health and identifiable issues that interfere with the client’s functioning and adjustment. The focus was described as being retrospective, dealing with issues of the unconscious and healing from earlier damaging experiences. According to the interviewees, therapy may involve medication, adjunct therapies, and co-ordination of additional services.
As psychotherapists, they would treat pathology using cognitive, behavioral, or analytical interventions. Conversely, coaches were described as having a prospective orientation focussed on goals, untapped potential, and identification of success factors that would enable a client to maximize his/her life and work fulfillment.

It is important to note that although some approaches in therapy may indeed serve a remedial/healing purpose, the perspective above does not take into account the longstanding existence of the developmental counselling approach and its mission to help people successfully navigate the various stages in life and career (Paisley & Benshoff, 1998). For example, researchers Danish, Petitpas and Hale (1993) noted that the distinction between an illness or medical model (where the focus is on illness, diagnosis, prescription, therapy, and cure) and a developmental model (where the focus is on optimal psychological development of clients and growth-producing person-environment fit) historically separated clinical psychology from counselling psychology.

Developmental counselling is “a framework for understanding clients and helping to set goals on their behalf” (Blocher, 2000a, p. 13). Within this framework, clients are viewed as complex and complete thinking, feeling, and acting beings. The goal of developmental counselling, therefore, is to help people change the way they think, feel, and act in relation to themselves and to their world (Blocher, 2000a). In order to help people make such changes, the developmental counsellor promotes choice and human freedom, self-awareness and awareness of the environment, mobilization of personal and practice resources, and development of human-environment interactive potential (Blocher, 2000b). When a developmental counsellor attempts to help a client who is not functioning optimally, s/he will not search for intrapsychic conflicts presumed to reside within the troubled client. Instead, the developmental counsellor will focus on the responses made by the client in troublesome situations and attempt to help that client deal practically and constructively with problems in
living (Blocher, 2000b). As a result, the client learns coping and mastery skills that can be applied in future situations, furthering one’s growth and development (Blocher, 2000b).

Returning to the Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic (2001) study, therapy was described by the interviewees as being an undefined, meandering process of uncovering and discovery. Therapeutic dialogue centred on feelings, emotional processing, and the past. Coaching, on the other hand, was described as being more structured, goal directed, action oriented, and focused on the here and now. Coaches were more likely to initiate topics for discussion, to offer direct advice, and to self-disclose. Again, not all counsellors would agree with this perspective put forth by the research participants. For example, counsellors with a cognitive-behavioural or solution focussed orientation would argue that they do not focus on feelings, emotional processing and the past but are instead, concerned with the present and goal directed behavioural change (Corey, 2001).

When engaged as a coach, participants in the Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic (2001) study saw themselves as being in partnership with their clients. Coaches, as was reported, used more humour, experienced more latitude, and expected more from their clients. When engaged as a therapist, participants were more likely to assume the role of protector or caretaker of clients and felt more responsible for client emotional fragility. Participants also stated that the issue of transference was ignored in the coaching relationship and dual relationships (i.e., having a coaching client who is also one’s golf partner) was possible in coaching, but an ethical violation in therapy.

The participants in Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic’s (2001) study also suggested that coaches without clinical training should refer to therapists clients who exhibited signs of depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety attacks, alcohol or drug addictions, a personality disorder, high degrees of chaos, persistent anger or aggression, self-destructive impulses or behaviours, the inability to take action and more forward, and extreme dependency. The
participants, however, expressed concern over whether or not non-clinically trained coaches would be able to recognize such signs. Furthermore, as coaches are taught the philosophy that all clients are "naturally creative, resourceful, and whole" (The Coaches Training Institute Co-Active Coaching Manual, 2000, p. 6), the interviewed participants suggested that coaches may turn a blind eye to signs of client dysfunction and try to manage such clientele without the proper training or skill set.

Echoing the concerns above, Berglas (2002) wrote an article discussing the dangers of executive coaching. As a psychologist and practicing executive coach, Berglas reviewed a case of an executive vice president who was excellent at sales but causing turmoil inside the company. The CEO of the company hired a nonclinically trained coach to work with the vice president. Despite the passage of time working with the coach, the vice-president was suspected of embezzlement. Eventually, the CEO hired Berglas to conduct a psychological assessment. The author concluded that the vice president had a narcissistic personality disorder. According to the author, working with the executive coach had only served to shield the vice president from pain and enhanced his sense of grandiosity. Berglas (2002) outlined three areas of concern. First, Berglas (2002) argued that executive coaches, particularly those inspired from sporting roots, often sell simple answers and quick results. Second, Berglas (2002) suggested that even when coaches do accept that an executive’s problem may take time to address, coaches tend to rely on behavioral solutions only. Finally, Berglas cautioned that coaches without therapeutic training would not be aware of transference and countertransference issues and consequently, may exploit or be ignorant of the power they hold over clients. Another therapist-coach from the Hart, Blattner and Leipsic (2001) study also pointed out that although confidentiality is important to maintain in the coaching relationship, it is an ethical demand of counselling.
The therapist-coaches in the Hart, Blattner & Leipsic (2001) study were asked what they thought therapists should be aware of before becoming a coach. In general, most of the interviewees agreed that coaching was best suited for therapists with a solution-focused orientation. It was emphasized that when coaching, one's role is to keep the process moving forward. It was suggested that coaches should avoid discussions of the past, focusing on symptoms, or drawing conclusions. With respect to executive coaching, the participants also stated that therapists wanting to break into this market would need to have a business mindset and prior experience in organizational function and leadership.

When considering issues for the future, Berglas (2002) and Hart, Blattner and Leipsic (2001) suggested that a source of ambiguity may exist if counsellors continuing to use their therapy based licence or insurance policy while practising as a coach. Second, all of the authors recommended that coach training programs include educational discussions on the coaching scope of practice. Third, the establishment of supervised coach training experiences was strongly advised. Finally, for therapists interested in becoming coaches, the interviewees recommended that such therapists enrol in a coach-training program and work with a personal coach. From the participants' perspective, being a good therapist did not necessarily make one a good coach.

In summary, Hart, Blattner and Leipsic's (2001) study and Berglas's (2002) essay offer a general narrative account of the thoughts and concerns of therapists-turned-coaches. As Hart et al. (2001) did not describe their research methodology, one is left to assume that the interviews were conducted on an informal basis, leaving the reader to question the empirical nature of the study. Furthermore, although Hart et al. (2001) mentioned that the sample contained 30 master level therapists-turned-coaches, the authors did not describe the type of coaching practised by the interviewees. As the participants recommended that therapists coming into the field of coaching have a pre-existing business background, one
may suggest that the sample consisted of therapists turned executive coaches. Furthermore, it appears from the Hart et al. (2001) study that the therapist-coaches were drawing from a traditional psychotherapist's perspective when comparing coaching to therapy. Likewise in Berglas's (2002) commentary, reference to counselling in comparison to coaching was limited to psychotherapy and executive coaching. Consequently, the comparison between personal coaching and personal counselling remains unknown. As the boundaries between personal coaching and personal counselling are arguably, more ambiguous than that of psychotherapy and executive coaching, one may suggest that the participants' recommendations for the future may be even more paramount for those interested in becoming a personal coach.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to answer the research question, “How do individuals with a Masters degree in counselling psychology and a certificate in coaching experience their training and professional roles?” Data collection consisted of unstructured, open-ended interviews with personal coaches who also had a minimum of a Masters degree in counselling psychology. The purpose of the unstructured interviews was to collect data rich in phenomenological reflections.

Method Selection

Phenomenological research examines human experiences through detailed descriptions of the people being studied (Colaizzi, 1978; Osborne, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1991). As Colaizzi wrote, phenomenology is “a method that remains with human experience as it is experienced, one which tries to sustain contact with experience as it is given” (1978, p. 53). Colaizzi argued that experience is: “(a) objectively real for myself and others, (b) not an internal state but a mode of presence to the world, (c) a mode of world presence that is existentially significant, and (d) as existentially significant, it is a legitimate and necessary content for understanding human psychology” (1978, p. 52). Given the lack of research in the field of personal coaching and in particular, the lack of research exploring the experience of personal life coaching in comparison to personal counselling, a qualitative phenomenological method was used due to its suitability for describing little known phenomenon (Osborne, 1990). Furthermore, as phenomenological research illuminates the subjective experience of participants, this approach was ideally suited for the goal of the proposed research which was to inform a better understanding of how individuals with both counselling and coaching backgrounds experience and make sense of the two professional roles.
The Role of the Researcher

In phenomenological study, it is the individual's subjective experience that is of interest to the researcher (Osborne, 1990). In order to obtain subjectively rich experiential data, the phenomenologist will attempt to prevent his/her own presuppositions from influencing the described phenomenological experience of the participants. By identifying one's presuppositions about the phenomenon and attempting to put them aside, a process known as bracketing, the phenomenological researcher aims to understand the phenomenon as it is, free from his/her own prior biases (Colaizzi, 1978; Osborne, 1990). The following paragraphs illustrate initial attempts to bracket my own research topic presuppositions. Bracketing also took place during the study by recording presuppositions in field notes taken after each interview.

Bracketing

As a personal coach and a Masters student of Counselling Psychology, I have personally experienced the training and practice of both professional roles simultaneously. Learning and practicing both professions has been fulfilling and challenging in that I have found value in the differences and yet at the same time, difficulty in sifting through the overlap to identify distinction. Adding to the experienced challenge has been a need to educate and defend both camps. For example, I have found that many coaches hold outdated beliefs about what counselling is and what counsellors do. In general, some coaches tend to believe that counselling is rooted in a medical model of diagnosis and problem solving. Many coaches are unaware of the post-modern, cognitive-behavioral, solution-focused and experiential approaches to counselling that are arguably more similar than different from coaching. The lack of understanding about counselling psychology is troubling because a historical body of research is available for coaches to utilize that could inform the coaching profession. Similarly, just as coaching is naïve about the counselling profession, I have also
found many counsellors to be ignorant of the coaching profession. Some counsellors have been quick to dismiss coaching as a motivational, cheerleading fad empty of theoretical grounding and lacking an ability to create meaningful change. My experience of learning and practicing coaching has been intensive, enriching, and life changing.

It is the experienced lack of communication between and knowledge about each profession that has served as the impetus in the formulation of my proposed research question. Underlying my research is a belief that a combination of coaching and counselling is superior to either one on its own. I recognize the necessity of putting aside all of the above stated assumptions and prior knowledge in order to produce research findings that will allow counsellors and coaches to arrive at their own conclusions.

Data Collection and Procedures

Participants

In phenomenological study, “the researcher needs as many participants as it takes to illuminate the phenomenon” (Osborne, 1990, p. 82). Illumination is said to have occurred when thematic attrition has emerged from the data analysis (Osborne, 1990, p.82). It was anticipated that a sample size of five to eight individuals would allow for multiple perspectives and satiation in data. It was also proposed that this sample size would reflect the anticipated challenge in obtaining participants given that coaching is a burgeoning field (ICF, 2003), and from personal networking in both professions, the number of coaches who also possess a counselling degree is small. In the end, five participants were interviewed for this study. In order to keep the identity of all participants confidential, participants selected a code name to be used in this report.

A snowball sampling method was used to recruit the participants. To initiate the snowball sampling, an independent rater (who had an MA in Counselling Psychology and was a certified coach) was provided with an initial letter of intent (Appendix A). The
independent rater emailed the letter to colleagues who had both counselling and coach training. Together with the letter of intent, the independent rater emailed a recruitment statement (Appendix I) introducing the research study and initial letter of intent. If after reading the letter an individual became interested in participating in the study, the individual indicated his/her interest by contacting myself by phone. After each interview, I asked each research participant, “Do you know of someone else who would be interested in participating in this study?” If the research participant was aware of another possible participant, the research participant was asked to email the recruitment introductory statement and initial letter of intent to his/her colleague(s). In that way, potential participants had the opportunity to decline or accept recruitment without any direct contact from myself.

The criterion for inclusion of participants in the sample was fivefold. The participants must have either completed all five training courses from CTI (Co-Active Coaching, Fulfillment, Balance, Process, In The Bones) or have completed the 30-hour Basic Intensive course taught through The Institute for Life Coach Training. The participants must also have had a Masters degree in counselling or counselling psychology. The participants must have had at least one-year experience working with counselling clients post Masters degree completion and at least one-year experience working with coaching clients post coach training completion. As it takes approximately one year to obtain enough one-to-one client hours for certification with the International Coaches Federation (ICF, 2003), a one-year experience criterion was set for coaches. In order to match the minimum experience required to become a certified coach, a one-year criterion was also set for counsellors. Finally, participants were required to have a computer and email as recruitment letters were sent electronically.

Recruitment of individuals with the above mentioned training was proposed for several reasons. First, the Coaches Training Institute (CTI) certification program and The
Institute for Life Coach Training are recognized training schools by the International Coaches Federation, the governing body for the coaching profession. Second, it was anticipated that I would have greater access to coaches from these two schools due to the fact that I am a graduate coach from CTI and I have also attended a day conference presented by the Institute for Life Coach Training. Third, coaches who have masters level training in counselling psychology will be able to describe first hand their experience of counselling in comparison to coaching. Forth, as I am both a certified coach and a master’s level counselling psychology student, it was believed that such credibility would serve to facilitate rapport and building of trust with the participants during the interviews.

In the end, five participants (three females and two males) were recruited for this study. Their ages ranged from 40 – 55 years. All of the participants had obtained a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology from different graduate schools and at different graduation years. Two participants attended Canadian universities: the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the University of Alberta (UOA). The remaining three participants attended American schools. Of the American participants, two attended the Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology and one attended John F. Kennedy University. Years of graduation were 1977 (John F. Kennedy), 1983 (University of Alberta), 1991 (Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology), 1993 (University of British Columbia), and 1997 (Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology).

After graduating from counselling school and prior coach training, four of the participants identified their main occupation as being a professional counsellor. One participant, who was formerly a pharmacist prior to entering the counselling training program, worked part time as both a counsellor and pharmacist after graduation. Four of the participants worked primarily in mental health community agencies and with people who had serious mental illness. The other participant worked as a counsellor in a university college
and as a consultant for an organizational consulting firm. She described her clientele as being primarily concerned with issues of school / career transition.

All five participants in this study received their coach training from the Coaches Training Institute. Two participants enrolled in 1999, one in 2000, and the final two in 2001. All five participants completed the five core courses and three completed the certification program, which included supervision. Of the two participants who did not complete the certification program, one participated in a weekly skill building group for 1.5 years, supervised by a leader from the Coaches Training Institute.

At the time of the interviews, all of the participants were operating private life coaching businesses. Two participants described their current practices as being 100% coaching related and no longer practiced counselling. A third participant distinguished his practice as being 40% coaching and 20% counselling related, with the other 40% directed towards coach instruction and writing. A fourth participant was building his private coaching practice and working as a pharmacist at the same time. This participant was no longer practicing counselling. A fifth participant was working in an organizational consulting firm and in private practice. She described her consulting work as being 50% coaching and 50% counselling related. Similarly, she described her private practice as being 50% coaching and 50% counselling related.

Procedures

Screening of participants took place over the telephone to determine if they fit the inclusion criteria. During this initial phone conversation, the nature of the study was presented “in as broad a context as possible” (Seidman, 1991, p. 38) and expectations of the participants were reviewed. Confidentiality was also discussed and participants were invited to choose a code name for use in written and oral reports. Once it was established that they met the criteria and wanted to proceed, an informed consent form (Appendix B) and a
participant background information questionnaire (Appendix C) was sent to the participants electronically. The informed consent form explained to participants that their involvement in the study was completely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time or may refrain from answering any questions that made them feel uncomfortable. The consent form also included the name and phone number of the researcher's supervisor as well as the researcher's own name and phone number. It reviewed the purpose of the study, described the methodology (audiotaped telephone interviews transcribed verbatim by the principal researcher) and reviewed how confidentiality was to be maintained during and after completion of the study. Background questionnaires asked demographic questions such as age, education, and questions regarding the extent to which the participants had been offering coaching and counselling services.

All interviews were audio taped and conducted by telephone. The length of each interview was between 90 - 120 minutes each. The researcher's supervisor, Dr. Borgen, listened to the first audiotape in order to ensure that researcher bias was not present during the telephone interview. It was determined that the interview was conducted without the presence of research bias.

The Data Collection Interview

As Seidman (1991) wrote, "We interview in order to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories" (p. 91). The aim of the phenomenological interview is to generate participants' in-depth descriptions of their experience and the meaning they attribute to their experience (Colaizzi, 1978). The researcher followed the three phases of phenomenological interviewing as suggested by Osborne (1990). In the first phase, rapport and trust was established between the researcher and the participants by beginning each interview with a general orienting statement (Appendix D) that reminded the participants of confidentiality and the purpose of the study. In the second phase, the researcher conducted
open-ended, minimally structured interviews in order to obtain phenomenological reflections. The purpose of the unstructured interviews was to discover how participants experienced the similarities and differences between the training and profession of counselling and coaching. The interviews were conducted in such a way that the focus of the research remained intact but attempts to lead the participants was avoided. As Osborne suggested, “reminding oneself that the aim is to allow the data to speak for themselves is advisable” (1990, p. 84).

Counselling skills such as active listening, paraphrasing, clarifying, and empathizing was used to facilitate participants’ articulation of their experiences without imposing researcher biased meaning (Osborne, 1990). Prompts and open-ended questions (refer to Appendix E), which were generated from my own self-exploration, were used as necessary when the participants seemed to have more to say but became stuck. These questions served to orient and open space for the phenomenon to reveal itself and to deepen the participants’ exploration of their own experience. In the final phase of the interview, I explained to participants that a follow-up validation interview was to be conducted which would serve as an opportunity for participants to discuss additional reflections that may have come up after the initial interview. Participants were also invited to ask any questions or discuss their experience of the first interview. Finally, I informed participants that they would receive a copy of the results section upon completion of the study.

Detailed field notes were recorded immediately after each interview in order to document the participant’s demeanour, verbal and non-verbal behavior, the tone of the interview, and any noticeable distractions that took place. The field notes also included the researchers personal reactions or biases that may have influenced the interviews. Following the interviews, the interview content on the audiotapes was transcribed verbatim. Tapes and transcriptions are kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home and will be destroyed after five years.
Data Analysis

A content analysis was undertaken to review the interview data. Specifically, data analysis followed the phenomenological research procedures outlined by Osborne (1990) and Colaizzi (1978). To begin, audio taped interviews were transcribed verbatim, each text line numbered, and three copies of each transcript made in order to facilitate retrieval, coding, and labelling of data. Next, I listened to each audiotape in order to obtain an overall feel for the data. Following this, I listened to each passage more carefully in order to extract “significant statements” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59) that directly pertained to the coaching and counselling experience. At this point, “creative insight” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59) was used in the formulation of meanings derived from each significant statement. The meaning statements were then organized into clusters of themes. The above process, which represented a within person’s analysis (Osborne, 1990), was repeated for each transcript. Once each transcript had been individually analyzed, an across-person analysis (Osborne, 1990) was conducted. These steps involved clustering themes across transcripts into common and unique categories. The common and unique theme clusters were repeatedly compared back to the original transcripts to ensure that the original meanings of the transcripts were still apparent.

Data are presented in the following two steps. First, a case narrative is described for each participant. Second, a comprehensive narrative is presented that represents an “exhaustive description of the investigated topic” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61) and illustrates the common and unique themes that emerged from the data.

Follow-Up Interview

A follow-up telephone interview (Appendix F) was conducted for the purpose of validating the preliminary findings by inviting participants to review and comment on the themes that emerged. Prior to conducting the follow-up interviews, participants received
their individual case narratives, biographical sketches, and a copy of their transcribed protocols by electronic mail. Participants were given one week to review the documents and make comments. In the end, only small grammatical changes to the individual narratives were required. Next, each participant received by electronic mail a copy of the comprehensive narrative and was asked to reflect on the themes identified prior to the follow-up interview. Once participants had received the comprehensive narrative, follow-up interviews were scheduled. During the follow-up interviews, I asked for the participants' reactions to the common themes. Upon reading the comprehensive narrative, two participants were triggered to share experiences that they had not previously mentioned during their initial interviews. These additional experiences have been noted in parenthesis in chapter four.

**Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research studies should be judged on the basis of their trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). To ensure trustworthiness of this qualitative research study, a number of strategies were put into place throughout the planning, data collecting and analysis stages of this project.

One such criterion of rigor is the 'credibility' of the research. Credibility refers to how vivid and faithful the description of the phenomenon is (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In other words, readers who have shared the same experience should recognize the researcher's description of the experience as being consistent with their own. In the proposed study, enhancing credibility began with the screening of participants for the purpose of matching individuals to the research criterion. The establishment of rapport and trust during the recruitment phase and throughout the interviews further supported credibility. By establishing rapport and trust, participants were more likely to disclose their personal experiences thereby enriching the credibility of the research. The process of bracketing, as
described in the role of the researcher above, also contributed to the credibility of the research by setting aside any of my own prior biases or constructions of reality so that the participants’ own voices were heard. Credibility was also enhanced by inviting the participants to engage in a follow-up interview for the purpose of verifying the thematic data presented in the final narrative.

Another criterion of rigor is the ‘auditability’ of the research. Auditability refers to the ability of another investigator to follow all of the decisions made at every stage of the analysis, similar to an audit trail (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Achieving auditability was established by providing readers with a detailed description of the research methodology, data analysis, and the factors that led to decisions and interpretations made by the researcher. A final criterion of rigor that was established in the proposed research was ‘fittingness’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The process involves selecting an external expert who will read the study at regular points until the final draft. The expert decides whether the investigation and findings are ‘fit’ and ‘acceptable’ in terms of his/her own experience. For this research study, my thesis supervisor Dr. Bill Borgen was selected to act as an external expert. Dr. Borgen found that the findings were ‘fit’ and acceptable in terms of his own experience. To further enhance fittingness, the findings were also given to one additional individual who met the research criterion but who was not included in the research study. In what is known as empathic generalizability (Osborne, 1990), the independent rater was asked to verify the extent to which the findings were reflective of his/her own experience (Appendix G). In the end, the independent rater found that the themes were ‘fit’ and ‘acceptable’ in terms of her own experience. One theme, which was originally worded as “The differences between coaching and counselling outnumber the similarities,” was changed to “There are fundamental differences between coaching and counselling.” All of the research participants
and the independent rater agreed that the re-wording of the theme captured the essence of their experience more accurately than the original phrasing.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter begins with a brief outline of the common and unique themes that emerged from the research data analysis. This is followed by individual case narratives that summarise each participant’s training and professional experiences as a counsellor and as a coach. A comprehensive narrative is presented at the end of this chapter representing a synthesis of the five case narratives. Upon reading the comprehensive narrative, two participants were triggered to share experiences that they had not previously mentioned during their initial interviews. These additional experiences have been noted in parenthesis.

Themes

1. A range of emotions experienced as counselling students.
2. The importance of friendships established with colleagues and professional relationships formed with professors and supervisors.
3. The student counsellor-client relationship.
4. The transition from student to professional counsellor.
5. There are fundamental differences between coaching and counselling:
   - the training to become a counsellor was different than the training to become a coach
   - coaching and counselling was experienced as being two distinctive models for creating change in the lives of people
   - participants experienced a difference in the philosophical stance taken by the two models
   - the counsellor-client relationship was inherently different from the coach-client relationship
6. Similarities experienced between coaching and counselling were to a certain extent, reflective of the participant's counselling theoretical orientation prior to becoming a
coach and the participant’s focus when conducting a type of coaching called process coaching.

7. Previous training and experience as counsellors was useful for the training and practice as coaches, but not necessarily a prerequisite.

8. Five areas of concern regarding the practice of coaching and two points of caution for counsellors interested in practicing coaching were identified.


10. Both counselling and coaching were experienced as being “powerful”, “valuable”, and “personally fulfilling” models for creating positive change in the lives of people.

Case Narratives

Nike Sapphire

Nike Sapphire is a 53-year coach who resides in Vancouver, Canada. Nike has a professional background in nursing, psychiatry, community mental health, clinical counselling, health care administration and planning, and more recently, coaching. She obtained a Masters of Counselling Psychology from the University of Alberta in 1983. Prior to enrolling in the counselling psychology program, Nike Sapphire worked as a clinical supervisor for a community mental health clinic. In this role, Nike trained therapists, psychologists, social workers, and nurses to provide patient intakes, mental status assessments, and therapy for people who were discharged from hospital but requiring follow-up assistance. As Nike was in a supervisory position at the mental health clinic, Nike decided to return to school in order to earn a MA counselling credential, to continue her education in the field of mental health, and to uphold a sense of credibility amongst those she supervised at work. After 7 years of counselling in the mental health field, Nike left counselling in 1990 to pursue a career in provincial health care administration, planning, and consultation.
By 1998, Nike was introduced to coaching by her sister-in-law, a professional coach. Nike enrolled in the Coaches Training Institute (CTI) program and became a Certified Professional Co-active Coach in 1999. For the past four years, Nike has operated a personal coaching practice in Vancouver, British Columbia and has also become a CTI leader, facilitating CTI coach training courses and certification supervisions. Nike currently defines her occupational title as Coach. She indicated that 100% of her current workload is coaching related and 0% of her current workload is counselling related.

Twenty years ago, when Nike was enrolled as a student in the University of Alberta’s MA Counselling Psychology program, the program consisted of two years of full-time academic study including a 2-semester practicum and a research thesis. Nike recalled taking courses in counselling theory, personality theory, and “standard courses” in therapy. The faculty at that time was eclectic in their approaches to counselling, thus, students were presented with a number of theoretical models that one could adopt. The practicum involved seeing clients at the university’s counselling clinic on a daily basis over 2 semesters. The university counselling clinic served a clientele spanning the entire continuum of health; from “serious mental illness to the worried well.” During the practicum, the student counsellors were videotaped and received supervision. The most salient aspects of this educational experience for Nike was observing guest counsellors, watching educational videos, having different counselling approaches modeled for the students, participating as a co-therapist with faculty instructors, and counselling clients in rooms with 2-way mirrors for supervisors to observe students.

Given Nike’s previous work experience in mental health, Nike came into the counselling psychology program with confidence. Nike “knew how to do mental status and suicide assessments” and was familiar with medications prior to starting the counselling program. Nike also noted that she did not learn about medications or how to conduct mental
status assessments as a counselling student. Nike reasoned that given her comfort and
previous experience working with mentally ill clients, she was assigned clients who were
dealing with serious mental illness issues. Consequently, the counselling practicum
experience was not unlike her previous experience working at the mental health clinic. Given
the severity of the issues that the university clinic dealt with, Nike described the training
experience to be “serious” and “significant.” For example:

People were really ill and really troubled. The clients came as a spill over
from a psychiatric walk in clinic…so there were people who had serious
mental illness, there were the worried well, and sort of everything in
between…the ones they funneled to me all tended to be pretty ill…everyone
took themselves very seriously…it was very significant.

Overall, Nike described her counselling training experience to be validating. She
received feedback from her supervisors that her counselling skills “were perfectly fine…in
fact, they were good.” Although receiving validation for her skills was important to Nike,
she felt that the validation was for skills that she already possessed. During her training
program and upon completion, Nike remembered feeling unfocussed:

I don’t remember feeling like I had specific tools. Just a big tangled hairball
of stuff that I knew. Nobody sat down and said “these are the skills, this is
how we are training you”…I don’t remember anyone sitting down and saying
“this is therapeutic and this isn’t”. They mostly said, “this was good, that
wasn’t good, you passed.”

During the counselling training program, Nike also recalled feeling that school was
“political.” For Nike, political was experienced as knowing who one should or should not
talk to, the importance of finding the right person for one’s thesis, and the feeling that there
was a status difference between students and professors:
It wasn't fun and it felt very political, you know who you talked to, who your advisor was on your thesis, all that stuff was very important...the political part [I was] really conscious of. I knew that I was a student and they were the professors which was really an unusual position for me because I had a senior position in the mental health clinic...it was a status difference.

Turning to coaching, Nike completed the five core courses with the Coaches Training Institute (Intro to Co-Active Coaching, Fulfillment, Balance, Process, In The Bones) and the six month certification program. Certification involved supervisions by telephone, one-to-one client coaching, weekly seminars by phone, weekly practice groups with colleagues, and a final oral and written exam. Students enrolled in the coaching program were responsible for finding their own paying clients and were expected to hire their own coach throughout the training program. In order to become a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach, students had to have accumulated at least 100 hours of one-to-one coaching, 6 supervisions, and pass both parts of the final exam.

Nike described the coach training experience as being “transformative.” She found the training helped her to change her own life and the lives of her clients. In the beginning, coach training felt like “a personal growth workshop” for Nike. She also found experiential learning, the primary teaching method used by CTI, to be “very powerful.” The entire coaching program was oriented around teaching students to become proficient at the CTI co-active model of coaching. Overall, Nike found that the coaching program was much more “focussed” and the expectations of the coaching students were more “clear” than what she had experienced as a counselling student. Nike reported that what contributed to the increased clarity and focus during her coach training was when the CTI leaders would name, identify, and model the coaching skills and principles. In turn, the coaching students repetitiously practiced the coaching skills so that they could name the skills that they were
using during a coaching session with a client. Some skills were formulaic in nature, furthering Nike's sense of structure and clarity when working with a client:

I felt a lot more focused in the coaching program. I felt much more clear on what the expectations were around how to do it...I could identify the skills, they were named...The three principles of co-active coaching were really clear and the ways to work with clients were clear...Having the skills done to me [during] the workshops and then practicing them over and over. Back and forth, "here is the balance formula, go and use it"...so learning by doing really made a difference, whereas it was more observation in the counselling program.

As previously described, coaching training first felt like personal development for Nike. But by the second coaching course, Nike began to understand that she was being trained to become a coach in service for other people. During this transition, coaching became "fun," "magical," and "exhilarating:"

I really started figuring out that they were training me to be a coach as opposed to giving me the experience so I could make up coaching. That was the experience, in a way, that I had when I went through my counselling practicum. I really felt like I had to make it up in the counselling practicum. Once the penny dropped for me in the coaching program, it became fun. I remember so clearly...I would hang up the phone after using the coaching skills on my new clients and after each client, I would say "this is magic, this is magic." I would run into the bedroom and say to my husband "you wouldn't believe this, but this is so cool, this is so magical" and then I would have to run back because I had another call...I just remember being so
exhilarated because even at that early phase, when I'm sure my coaching was pretty bad, people were moving forward and getting what they wanted.

One of the most important aspects of the coach training experience for Nike was supervision during the certification program. Nike found the certification program to be "quite rigorous." Supervisions consisted of playing audio-recorded coaching sessions over the phone to a supervisor. The supervisor would listen to a portion of the session and provide feedback. Each student participated in supervision sessions with three different CTI supervisors.

Nike remembered feeling very nervous about supervision and wanting to do coaching correctly:

I remember my supervisions, being really nervous about them. Even though I had already gone through this counselling practicum and I had worked with people, I remember being really nervous and really worried about doing it right and wanting to get the skills.

Nike also found that she was greatly influenced by the supervisors' ability to provide her with constructive feedback:

I would play my tape for the supervisor who would listen to it and give me feedback. So much depended on the quality [and] ability of the supervisor to give feedback. I had three different supervisors and in one particular incident, one made me want to quit coaching. I was so devastated... I just remember feeling very bad and calling up my friends and saying "you know, I don’t think this coaching thing is going to work, I don’t think I can do it." I received a lot of coaching around it and then I asked for what I wanted from this person. I said "you know, when you said this I felt like this and I’m really
fragile right now...” What I really valued in the supervisions was having someone listen to my coaching and gently explain to me, “OK, this is what you said and here is how the skill should be delivered. Here is another way to do it that may have more impact.”

Nike also reflected on the importance of the oral and written exam. The exam took place over one day and involved writing a closed book exam and then coaching two different clients for 15 minutes each. The oral portions of the exam were videotaped and observed by three examiners. Although Nike was nervous about the exam, she found it to be a “lovely” experience. She found the exam day was like “going to a workshop...it was easy to be there...but because [the examiners] didn’t give any [immediate] feedback, you are just kind of left hanging...so when I found out I had passed, it was a joyful day.”

Nike identified six points of similarity between her experience as a student and professional counsellor and her experience as a student and professional coach. First, during the beginning phase of both training experiences, Nike felt like she had to “make up” coaching and counselling. As Nike described, the training programs started as “soft and squishy.” It wasn’t until the third coaching course titled “Balance” that Nike felt she understood what coaching was about and how to do it. For example, “by Balance...I really started figuring out that they were training me to be a coach.” Although coaching became clearer as the training program progressed, Nike remained feeling unfocussed throughout her student counselling experience. As Nike recalled, “I never really felt I had a grasp of a theoretical model that I had picked. The sort of style of the day was to be eclectic, and I didn’t embrace any one particular thing. I felt like I was working by the seat of my pants, except when I was working in an area where I had lots of experience with, which was working with people who were on medications, who had diagnosed mental illnesses, and really observable pathology.”
A second point of similarity was the importance of supervision as a student coach and as a student counsellor. Nike conceded that she received both good and bad supervisions during her training as a counsellor as well as a coach. Nike also described the opportunity for supervision within both training schools as being pivotal in her personal and professional development as a counsellor and coach.

Third, Nike described that the amount of direct advice that she would give to coaching clients in comparison to counselling clients as being small in both cases, but with a greater propensity of advice giving when she was a counsellor. Overall, Nike remembered times of providing advice as well as withholding advice in the counselling setting. Similarly, Nike has found that she does not provide advice in the coaching role, although she conceded that it is sometimes tempting to do so.

Fourth, Nike recalled that she had always sensed using herself as the primary instrument of change when working with clients as a counsellor and as a coach. As Nike stated, “I just remember getting a sense of really just using myself as the instrument in counselling...I also felt as a coach that the instrument is me... My best assessment tool is my brain.”

Fifth, Nike noted that the divisions between counselling training schools have become apparent between coach training schools as well, most notably between The Coaches Training Institute and Coach U. Nike recalled the divisions between psychiatric nurses and registered nurses, the divisions between psychologists and psychiatrists, the divisions between counsellors and psychologists, and now a division amongst coaching schools. Nike reasoned that such divisions are a reflection of human nature. Finally, Nike stated that in both counselling and coaching, one is put in front of people and there is an expectation for some kind of result to occur. As will be discussed, however, Nike found that counsellors and coaches have different expectations and definitions for results.
Nike discussed four points of difference that she experienced as a student and professional counsellor in comparison to her experience as a student and professional coach. Firstly, the expectation that was taught in counselling school was that clients would either get better or not get sicker. As Nike described, “you certainly didn’t want them to die or go to hospital, the dreaded psychiatric ward…That was seen as kind of a lose, if your patient had to go to hospital that was really bad.” In comparison, the expectation in coaching was that people move forward in their lives. This expectation was grounded in the Coaches Training Institute’s guiding philosophy that people are “naturally creative resourceful and whole.” For Nike, this concept represented a major shift in thinking about people and how to help people create change in their lives. As explored by Nike:

A big shift for me was this whole concept of people being naturally creative, resourceful, and whole…I know for sure when I was doing the [counselling] work, I was not holding them naturally creative, resourceful, and whole in the same way I look at people now…and I know this to be true for when I have…coached people who have a mental illness… I now regard [people with mental illness] differently than I used to...It’s like really believing that they are going to find their way. Really believing that they have the resources. They might not be in a resourceful state right now, and they can be…I really believe that so much rests on how I hold them…my beliefs about them…In counselling, there was definitely a belief that these people are not well, these people are sick. That was one of the things I really didn’t like about working as a clinician in mental health at that time, and I think it is still true.

A second major difference experienced by Nike while in school was the differing method of instruction. Nike described the counselling training as theoretical and the coach training as experiential. Nike completed a research thesis while attending the counselling
program but was not required to conduct research or read theoretical material while enrolled in the coach training school. Although Nike experienced the coaching certification program to be challenging, she found the coaching program, in comparison to the counselling program, as lacking academic rigor. Also, due to the experiential nature of the coach training program, Nike found that her coach training was more applicable to her own life than the training she received in counselling school. For example, “counselling was observational/theoretical...it felt heady. Coaching felt more like I could make this real...that I could see its application in my own life. I could feel that I was making progress myself.”

A third difference Nike experience while attending the two schools was the method of evaluation. While attending graduate school for counselling, students received grades at the end of each course. Whereas in coaching school, students received a numerical mark (from 1-10, with 10 being most proficient) after every supervised coaching session. Nike found that quantifying her coaching sessions during supervision helped her to develop and deepen her coaching skills with more clarity that when she was learning counselling skills.

A fourth point of difference between coaching and counselling experienced by Nike was the type of clients she served as a counsellor and as a coach. For example, Nike stated that coaching clients “don’t come with the same issues of illness or not being able to move in the same way. [Coaching clients] are not hampered or stuck in the same way because of pathology...It is a different model...It was real clear when I was going through counselling that the kind of counselling that I was doing was for people who were really not coping. This wasn’t like solution-focused therapy...it wasn’t about dealing with...the worried well...Mostly the work that I did was with people who had pretty tough stuff going on.”

When recalling her first experiences working with clients during the coach-training program, Nike noticed that she attracted clients who seemed to need therapy or counselling. Many of
her initial coaching clients seemed to be "stuck in really icky places." However, as she moved through the coaching program and created a private coaching practice, she noticed that the number of therapy-like clients reduced. As described by Nike, "the people I serve now all are what I would call fully functioning and the people I worked with as a counsellor / therapist were not always fully functioning."

Nike reasoned that the shift in clientele may have come about as she became more clear about what her role as a coach was and what language to use when wearing the coaches' hat. For example, Nike described the initial transition from therapy to coach as being challenging as she had to focus on separating therapeutic questions and responses from coaching questions and responses:

One of the things that was challenging for me was I had a lot of therapeutic responses hard-wired in my brain. This came up, particularly when I started doing process coaching, which involved coaching people on where they are [in the moment]. It dealt more with feelings than moving people into action. Despite the fact that I hadn't done counselling or therapy work for about nine years, I would be working with a coaching client and out of nowhere came these therapeutic questions!

Nike learned to manage the transition from therapist to coach by "working in a coaching circle, ...and by making columns on my computer of what the client said. I would record the therapeutic response that came out of my mouth, and then write down the coaching response that I would rather have used."

When comparing her professional role as a coach to that of counsellor, Nike commented on three differing aspects. First, Nike found that the training and profession of coaching has required her to become more entrepreneurial than when she was a counsellor. For example, in order to practice coaching during the training program and then go on to build a successful private coaching practice, Nike had to learn how to find and retain her own
clients. Throughout the coach-training program, Nike was responsible for finding her own paying clients to work with. Part of the CTI coaching curriculum included seminars on how to build a coaching practice. In comparison, Nike’s experience as a counsellor was that of employee working for an organization. As a counselling student, Nike did not have to learn the business of recruiting clients because the university counselling clinic provided a steady stream of clientele.

Upon reflection, Nike stated that “part of me would love to coach and be part of an organization...finding my own clients is the experience of coaching that I like least...I would be happy from sunrise to sunset if I had more certainty.” On the other hand, Nike likes “the freedom of being self employed, there is no question that I enjoy being able to do things when I want, to run off for training and do this and that...being self employed has made the experience quite different.” When looking back at her experience working as a counsellor at a mental health clinic, Nike remembered “a lot of politics” being present. She stated that she was “happy to be politic-free. So it’s not completely rosy...It is mixed. More or less, I find that coaching is not as political as working in a health care system.”

Second, Nike has also experienced a difference in the public opinion of the two professional roles. Nike has found that she spends more time explaining what coaching is to people than she ever did when she was a counsellor. For example, “people tend to think they know what a counsellor does and they don’t tend to know what a coach does, so there is a lot explaining that I do not remember when I was doing counselling.” As the coaching profession has yet to establish a clear identity within the public’s eyes, Nike recommended that coaches be “really careful about how we present ourselves” and suggests that coaches “belong to a professional organization.”

Third, when asked to find a word or phrase that captured the essence of counsellor and coach, Nike described counsellor as “professional expert” and coach as a “professional
deep mirror.” Nike explained that when she was a counsellor in the 70’s and 80’s, there was a tendency to believe that counsellors were the experts. For example, “there was a belief that we are professionals and we know best whereas collective coaching is based on how we design the alliance...the coach and client are equal. So there is not a one-up / one-down which I recall very clearly from being a counsellor working with people.”

Being a “deep mirror” in coaching for Nike has meant that she has had to live by example:

I remember thinking [in counselling] I am not valuing people...Who am I to say this is right for you, when in fact...I couldn’t point to my own life as being completely hassle free...trouble free...So I remember feeling a bit of...hypocrisy...Coaching feels more in integrity, and I don’t mean to say I was out of integrity as a therapist, but it was just the feeling...It’s a motivating thing for me to lead by example or to live the kind of life that I really truly want for my clients...[As a coach, I strive to] live according to my values and I believe that people are naturally creative, resourceful and whole. That it is possible to have the life you want.

Finally, when asked if there were any carry over effects from her counselling experience to coaching, Nike identified four. First, Nike stated that the counselling profession’s mandate to uphold client confidentiality remained with her as a coach. She suggested that coaches should “be very careful about client confidentiality.” Second, Nike would like to see an increase in the amount of rigor and research required to become a coach and to maintain coach certification. Nike hopes that in doing so, the coaching profession will continue to build its own body of knowledge just as the counselling profession has acquired. Third, Nike stated that they way she maintains client records “is much more counsellor / therapist like than most coaches.” Nike reasoned that from her counselling and nursing
training, she carried forth the practice of recording client notes as if her files were to be examined in a court of law. Fourth, Nike felt that her previous experience as a therapist put her at an advantage when learning to become a coach because she already knew how to establish rapport with people. As stated by Nike “I knew how to sit down in front of someone and have a meaningful conversation.” Finally, the transition from counselling to coaching has been a “natural evolution” for Nike. Her nursing, counselling, and administrative background were not been left behind or replaced by coaching. Instead, coaching became “a way to channel a lot of the other things that I had learned over the years.”

**Peggy**

Peggy is a 47-year old female who graduated in 1993 from the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada, with a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology. After graduating from UBC, Peggy held various counselling related positions including a counsellor for a career transition program, a faculty member at a university college, and an advisor for Canadians working abroad. For the past three years, Peggy has been working as a consultant for an organizational consulting firm and in private practice. In 2000, Peggy enrolled in the Coaches Training Institute and completed the course work for the core and certification programs.

Prior to enrolling in the counselling program, Peggy experienced an “intuitive” draw to counselling literature and was “keenly interested” in the field of counselling. When reflecting back on her overall experience as a student counsellor, Peggy stated that “the whole program was excellent” and she believed that it was the most comprehensive program across Canada at that time. She suggested that the program might still hold such a ranking today. Peggy was thrilled with the “experience and calibre of the professors” and the “level of instruction” that she received as a student. In fact, the most important aspect of her
experience as a student counsellor was “the credibility of the people that were teaching me”.
For Peggy, what made her experience as a student counsellor “so superior” were the connections that she established with several of her professors and classmates. She experienced the professors as being mentors throughout her entire program who took “a personal interest in myself and provided me with genuine support…not just in my program, but in my life in general”.

Peggy also expressed appreciation for the research component of her counselling program. She found the research conducted by the department to be “applicable” to the practice of counselling, “vibrant”, and “extraordinary”. Peggy also found invaluable, the opportunity to work on projects conducted by some of her professors. Peggy was also inspired by members of her student peer group. She explained that it was “an honour…to be amongst them”. Finally, another aspect of the student counselling experience that was important to Peggy was her ability to become professionally affiliated with counselling associations upon graduation.

In addition to the quality of the instruction, research, and peer cohort, Peggy found the practicum experiences that she had as a student provided her with “an incredibly rich learning environment that couldn’t be replicated any other place”. Peggy worked at the university’s counselling resource centre in an eight-month counselling clinic (1 day per week) and an eight-month counselling practicum (3 days per week). Her clientele included students, faculty, and staff at UBC. Typically, Peggy worked with people in transition. As she found, “students are typically going through transition. They are either new to school, or exiting school, or they are defining their careers as a result of their experiences there”. Peggy facilitated individual, group, and relationship counselling sessions. One of the practicum highlights for Peggy was working in counselling teams such that one client might have four counsellors. The combination of team reflection, collegial support, supervision, and
interdepartmental consultation contributed to Peggy’s sense of confidence in her own skills as a counsellor, and in the counselling program as a whole.

As a student, Peggy had an eclectic approach to counselling. She employed “a combination of Solution Focussed, Rogerian, Jungian, Gestalt, and Brief Therapy” depending on what issues the client brought to the counselling sessions and the program parameters. She also enjoyed the opportunity to “witness progress and change for the betterment of the client” as she was able to see clients consistently across time. While practising her counselling skills as a student, Peggy always felt that there was permission to make mistakes, to bring creativity into the counselling session, and to add “fun” where therapeutically appropriate. She also enjoyed a well-appointed counselling office, a supportive administrative system and professional opportunities to participate in the resource centre’s strategic and administrative planning sessions.

With respect to the philosophy of counselling, Peggy experienced counselling as “an effective vehicle for overcoming everyday struggles...the more common pedestrian challenges that are presented to us all”. She also experienced the counselling program as having a “whole life perspective”. If a client’s presenting issues were in the “psychiatric realm” such as “severe manic depression, chronic depression, or psychosis”, Peggy was able to consult with and refer to a psychiatrist at the university hospital. When questioning if a client was in need of psychiatric help, Peggy would consult with her onsite supervisor, her counselling colleagues, the psychiatrist, and the client. Peggy not only experienced consultation and referral as a learning opportunity available to her as a student, but she also saw it as an “ethical responsibility” to notify the client when the presenting issue was beyond her scope of practice and expertise.

When asked if there was anything about being a student counsellor that was troublesome, Peggy responded that on an occasion, she experienced the department’s
espoused philosophy that “counselling is for helping people overcome everyday challenges” clashed with a perspective that people who sought out counselling “needed fixing”. Peggy provided the following example:

I remember this one student who I was working with...an oriental young man who was shy. He had moved cross cultures, so he wasn’t confident in this culture. He anted to date and he didn’t know how to go about it in the Western culture. So that was the focus of our counselling sessions...how you go about approaching women that you are interested in going out with. To me...he was exhibiting health by seeking assistance in that way. He was seeking specific skills leading to acculturation. So I wouldn’t consider him to be unhealthy. But I struggled with the counselling perspective was that there was something that was wrong with him that needed to be fixed a bit...That may have been just my overlay, but, I would prefer to see him as a young man wanting to have success in other areas of his life beyond academic life and family. He wanted to experience success in an intimate relationship.

On a personal note, Peggy experienced a double message in the counselling department when she sought out counselling for herself. As Peggy explained:

I coordinated an international student program and tragically, one of the international students committed suicide. And of course I was pretty heart broken because I knew this young man... he’d come from Indonesia where his family had worked very hard to get him to [UBC]...He was a star person and extremely talented, but he wasn’t getting good grades...and that’s understandable because of culture shock and all kinds of things... Anyway, he went for a winter swim in the ocean and died. So my response was to seek counselling for myself so that I could work through my own grieving process.
[However], once I embarked on counselling for myself, that triggered a mechanism within the counselling psychology department where the department head and a few other people interviewed me for, I guess, my mental soundness to continue on with the program. I found that somewhat confusing because we're promoting counselling an effective method to manage and overcome everyday challenges including issues pertaining to death as one of those sorts of things that everyone encounters at one point or another. So to me, this was a proactive response to a situation that had occurred but the department questioned the health of that. It was like that if you made a supposition that if you're going to seek counselling, that you are unhealthy.

When asked how that situation resolved itself, Peggy stated that the meeting lasted for only 20 minutes and “that was the end of that... everything was fine and I carried on with my program”. As summarized by Peggy, “that was one little source of query that I had in that program. Then on the other hand, it makes sense that if one is really struggling emotionally that people be there to support them”.

One of the ways Peggy made sense of this experience was to reflect on the privilege that existed in the world of academia and in her own life. For example, Peggy suggested that in a university, “there is a certain type of person that you're likely going to meet in that environment... who is high functioning and privileged”. In turn, Peggy suggested that such an environment could breed “professional arrogance”. As a student, Peggy became aware of her own propensity for “arrogance” and began to appreciate more fully, the diversity in people’s life experiences, expectations, and values. When looking back at her student counselling experience, Peggy reflected that the training had become a part of her. She
described it as being “a tremendous experience in my life and I’m very grateful for having that opportunity”.

Seven years later, Peggy enrolled in the coaches training program with The Coaches Training Institute. For Peggy, “the differences [between counselling and coaching school] pop out a lot more for me than the similarities”. First, she found the coaching student cohort to be more “heterogeneous” and “street wise” than her counselling cohort. As Peggy described, “the [coaching students] came from a greater variety of occupations...a greater variety of geographical range, broader range in terms of age and life experience...it was a more diversified group to learn in”. Second, the training format of the two schools was drastically different given that the counselling program involved two years of full time course work in comparison to five coaching courses, each conducted over three days for the core program. Third, the amount of supervised client interaction differed significantly between the two schools such that Peggy practiced her counselling skills under direct supervision for 16 months whereas she participated in the six month certification program where she received only 9 hours of supervision by telephone. Fourth, Peggy also pointed out the fact that anyone could attend the Coaches Training Institute as there were no pre-requisites or requirements for entry whereas acceptance into the graduate counselling program was determined by undergraduate marks, graduate record exam scores, course pre-requisites, references, and previous work experience.

Although Peggy enjoyed learning about the coaching approach to working with people, she did not experience the coaching program and some of its facilitators, as having professional substance. Peggy was “frustrated”, “disappointed”, and occasionally “disturbed” by a lack of “professional rigor”, “education and academic knowledge [of the facilitators]”, “professional ethics” and an “inadequate [practice and teaching of] client confidentiality".
Over time, the teachings of the coaching program “became less believable” for Peggy. For example:

I did not experience the facilitators to have the same educational level and the same professional ilk as the counselling group. That was a source of frustration for me because, I guess, I am the type of person who needs significant buy in that these people know what they are talking about. To give you a concrete example of that, I remember listening to an audiotape on how to deal with fear in your clients. On the tape was this guy with an attitude of “look, I’ve got no background in psychology whatsoever, done no reading, know none of the research and here’s what you do if a client has fear...here is a three-step full safe program. Do this and it will automatically irradiate [your client’s] fear forever”...I was so disappointed because based on my counselling experience, this person had no idea what he was talking about and could do harm. That fact that he didn’t even recognize that he could do harm was what upset me the most. It’s like the 14-year old in the paper this morning that stole a car and killed a person. They don’t realize how much harm they could do...so I found that very disturbing in the coaching program.

Fortunately, Peggy did meet some instructors that she had “a huge amount of professional respect for”. She also found that she was able to overcome her resistance to the program due to the lack of professionalism and was instead, able to focus on the “value” and “huge efficacy” of the coaching model itself. First, the coach training program enabled Peggy to “entertain a different perspective on clients, [namely], that people are creative, resourceful, and whole”. As Peggy explained, “I came into the counselling program believing that people were inherently resourceful. However, one source of confusion for me during the counselling training was when the counselling profession at large seemed to
question the resourcefulness of people. So, once I learnt about the coaching model and its tenant to hold people as creative, resourceful, and whole, I think the coaching philosophy became...a more natural fit for me than the counselling philosophy”.

Second, she found that the coaching program encouraged her to work on her own personal development more so than the counselling program. Of particular note, Peggy was required to work with her own coach during the certification phase of the coaching program. In comparison, and as was previously described, having her own counsellor during counselling school was not celebrated. Third, the coaching program encouraged the students to bring more of themselves “to the intervention or the work as a coach” in comparison to her experience as a student counsellor. Finally, unlike the counselling program, the coaching program included marketing tips for building a private practice.

Currently, Peggy operates as both a coach and a counsellor. She experiences both coaching and counselling as being “very powerful” and has found that “both can create profound change”. When asked to reflect on the occupational titles that would best represent her work as a coach and as a counsellor, Peggy stated that “I feel like I’m a counsellor professional and a coaching practitioner”. Peggy further explained, “I don’t experience coaching as a profession. I experience it as an industry”. When asked how she experienced counselling as a profession, Peggy stated that “a research foundation” and “a theoretical basis for what one is doing” is present.

For Peggy, the distinctions between coaching and counselling are greater than the overlap. For example, Peggy experiences coaching and counselling as being “two skill constellations on the same [helping] continuum”. As Peggy described, “I see psychiatry as being on the opposite end of the continuum to coaching. So if you looked at client functioning as being the indicator of [where coaching begins and where counselling ends]...I think [one would move] through a need for psychiatric intervention, to assistance with
counselling, to hooking up with a coach as they increase in their function”. Peggy related her concept of the continuum to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. For example, “once the physical basics such as food, water, and shelter are covered off...and once emotional and intellectual issues have been resolved...then the focus can be on moving forward and experiencing enhanced fulfillment in life”.

Peggy used the following metaphor to further illustrate her experience of coaching and counselling:

It’s like looking above the horizon and then there’s the land you can see below the horizon. To me, [coaching and counselling] are distinctive. They are both on the landscape, they are both in view. But for me, counselling would be more the land that we can see and [the accompanying problems], and the coaching would be more of the sky above...looking at what the possibilities are.

Not only has Peggy experienced coaching and counselling to be distinctive, but she has also experienced within herself and within her clients, an ability to shift from coaching to counselling within the same working relationship. To illustrate, Peggy described a coaching client that she was working with who witnessed the terrorist attack on the world trade centre: She and I had been coaching for about 1 year before that happened and she asked if we could do counselling instead. So I was able to revert back to counselling for 3 months. Then she decided that she wanted to move forward and go back to the coaching...The counselling was about the grieving process that this client was experiencing as a result of her witnessing the second plane hitting the tower. For her, it triggered some childhood losses [such as the death of her mother when she was little] and some unmet needs from childhood that were [creating problems] for her in her present life. For example, she was afraid to leave the house, and yet when she did
leave the house, she was afraid to go home...So our counselling focused on the grieving process and the healing of those childhood wounds.

One aspect of this experience that Peggy found interesting was that her client decided overnight, "okay, I’m done with counselling and I want the coaching again". Accordingly, Peggy traded her counselling hat for her coaching hat. In doing so, Peggy noticed a shift in focus and a change in her perspective of her client. For example, where the counselling focus was on questioning "what wounds are being exasperated from this critical incident?" the coaching focus became "given this profound experience, what is different for you moving forward?...what do you want to bring to fruition now?" During this shift in focus, Peggy found herself being less empathetic and more goal / outcome focussed.

Peggy noticed a shift in perspective from "my client as someone needing intervention to my client as someone who is healthy". Peggy was able to illustrate the shift in perspective with the following metaphor:

When the client requested that we switch to coaching, I became her co-pilot with the client being in full command of the ship. Counselling and coaching are both helping professions, but I became her co-pilot instead of her therapist. Peggy experiences being the co-pilot as having "a lot less pressure", "more fun", and it "feels more expansive" than being the "helping professional / therapist". Peggy has noticed that the locus of control shifts from counsellor to client when transitioning from counselling to coaching. As Peggy described:

The helper’s stance in counselling is someone is an expert that will bring forth different interventions to help the client over a hurdle whereas the coaching perspective views the client and their role with the client differently. [In coaching], the client is [assumed to be] the person that has the best knowledge about themselves and has the answers within themselves or within reach. I
think what appeals to me or what I see different [about coaching in comparison to counselling] is that the coaching model resources the client’s abilities more than counselling. Counselling tends to place the locus of control in the counsellor more than the client.

Similarly, Peggy has noticed a difference in expectation for change and forward movement if a client is in counselling as opposed to coaching. For example, “there is an expectation in coaching that clients do change their behaviors, so if the client isn’t making change in a behavioral way, then the coaching will stall. Whereas with counselling, you can kind of go on indefinitely in a process of exploration of past events and not necessarily create behavioral change...depending on what counselling model you are using”.

Finally, Peggy noted that the frequency of client sessions by telephone is far greater in coaching than counselling work. Although Peggy has conducted counselling sessions over the phone, and continues to do so, “in coaching, the telephone is the main method of working with people, whereas in counselling, it would be an alternative method that would be based on lack of proximity.”

In conclusion, Peggy is “glad” that she has had exposure to both coaching and counselling. In particular, she credits the confidence that she currently feels as a coach to her previous training and experience as a counsellor. Furthermore, she believes that having a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology has given her credibility and a professional edge over coaches without such a background.

Natalie

Natalie is a 42-year old coach who lives in Minnesota, USA. She earned a Masters of Arts degree in Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy from the Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology in 1991. She worked as an intern therapist then therapist in a women’s correctional facility for 2 ½ years. She has worked in mental health for 12 years as a
counselor, supervisor, and then director of a community mental health program. In year 2000, Natalie completed the coach training courses with The Coaches Training Institute and now operates a life coaching practice. Natalie has been an instructor for the Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology since 1999 teaching clinical assessment. In 2003 she developed and began teaching graduate level courses in life coaching. Currently most of the students who pursue the coaching certificate are primarily pursuing a master’s degree in counseling followed by licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). Students may also enter with a bachelors degree and pursue only the Life Coaching certificate and/or a certificate in Human and Organizational Development.

The Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology is designed for working adults. Natalie’s masters program consisted of 60 credits or 30 classes, with 1 credit equaling 10 hours of classroom time. Class instruction coincided with three levels of experiential learning. In the first level, students would counsel peers, co-facilitate support groups, or provide information on help lines. In the second level of experience, students would co-facilitate group therapy. In the third level of practice, students would counsel clients on a one-to-one basis. Natalie’s second and third level training experiences involved working as a student counsellor in two practicum sites; at a women’s prison and at a mental health centre working with seriously mentally ill adults. At the women’s prison, Natalie provided individual therapy as well as co-facilitated treatment groups that addressed topics such as sexuality, women’s issues, chemical dependency, and art therapy. When working at the community mental health centre, Natalie facilitated various therapy groups, with an emphasis on practical life skills such as creating friendships and building community connections. She also provided individual counseling, crisis counseling, resource referral, psychosocial activities, and varied educational opportunities in topics of health and wellness.
After "searching a long time in my life to find what I wanted to do," becoming a student in the Adler counselling program was a thrilling experience for Natalie. During her student counselling years, she found herself to be both very busy and extremely happy now that she had found her calling in life. Natalie treasured the friendships and colleagues made during her school years and maintained to date. By the time she was finishing her counselling training program, Natalie recalled feeling confident that she knew what she was doing as a counsellor. Natalie reasoned that her sense of clarity regarding how to proceed with counselling clients stemmed from the strong Adlerian philosophy that was taught in the counselling program and during the practical experience. For example, Natalie noticed that when she was working with practicum students from other counselling training schools, many of the students who came in with an eclectic approach to counselling "seemed kind of lost." For Natalie, "as the philosophical foundation was really strong, you knew why you’re doing what you’re doing and you had a specific structure that you could follow. That was really helpful."

For Natalie, the Adlerian approach to psychology "made a lot of sense" to her. Natalie explained that Adlerian psychology is more than just an approach to psychology, it is a lifestyle. It is a philosophical approach to life that Adler had "developed for the masses...anyone could learn it." Natalie described six core beliefs within Adlerian psychology that informed her approach to counselling as a student. First and foremost, Adler believed that "in order for people to be well, people need a way to contribute in socially useful ways, and they need a way to belong." The better people became at contributing to society in socially useful ways, the greater sense of belonging people would acquire. This in turn, would lead to enhanced mental health. As Natalie illustrated:

"We evaluated how someone was doing, how they were functioning...If someone’s life was really falling part, it might be that the only thing they
could manage was whatever work or contribution was right in front of them. [For example], I might help that person to see how they could volunteer something of themselves by making coffee for the rest of the community, encouraging the person to contribute further. Second, Adler believed that people wanted to move forward in life and that they were motivated by life goals. Third, successful movement towards those life goals depended on one’s belief system. “What we believe about ourselves, what we should be, how life is, how other people are, how the world is, what we believe ethically, all these things are a road map, and sometimes the roadmap works against us” as Natalie explained. Fourth, an Adlerian counsellor would focus on helping the client to identify the beliefs that were helpful or harmful to one’s life and help the client make any desired changes. Fifth, in the process of changing one’s beliefs, a change in one’s emotions and behaviours would result. Finally, Adler talked about “universal life tasks.” As explained by Natalie, “Adler [would say that] we all face the same challenges in life. We all face the same big questions such as what to do about work, friendship, love, what to do about ourselves spiritually.”

As a student Adlerian counsellor, Natalie was encouraged to be up front about her own values when working with a client and to avoid pretending to be a “valueless vessel” when wearing the therapist’s hat. Instead, the therapeutic relationship between a client and an Adlerian counsellor was to be based on “mutual respect, equality, and the forming of a partnership...that focussed on education and the changes that [the client] wanted.” Natalie experienced various therapeutic roles as the relationship with her clients evolved. In the first part of counselling, Natalie described herself as being primarily a listener and gatherer of information. An Adlerian tool that Natalie was taught to use as a guide when gathering
information was called a “Lifestyle Analysis.” It consisted of series of questions such as “What would your life be like if you didn’t have this problem or symptom?”

Another part of Natalie’s role as a counsellor was to educate clients about the philosophy of Adlerian psychology. For example, “basically, people feel victimized by external forces. Adlerian psychology helped them to see that they’re driving the bus. What you believe and how you conduct yourself impacts your life and that you can creatively redesign your life. So as a student, [I] helped people come to see that they were driving the bus... or making choices. Your belief system develops long before you are aware of the choices you are making but in the process of therapy, you learn to be deliberate about your choices. So you adopt beliefs that are socially useful and personally useful at the same time, and then use those to guide your life.”

Natalie also described herself as being a “reframer” or one who would offer the client a different perspective regarding the client’s life. She explained that a large part of her work as a counsellor involved being a witness to a client’s expression of emotion. Part of the witnessing involved encouraging people to become more honest and forgiving in their own lives. As the Adlerian approach to counselling was lifestyle oriented, Natalie also experienced herself as a teacher of practical lifestyle skills. For example, “in mental illness, I interned in a program called the friends program. It was to teach people friendship skills to create a social network for themselves in a real practical way. Having group time once a week to talk about how your life is going and learn mental health skills and having a social function once a week. So people would get to know each other and learn how to take the bus [to a friend’s home] or how to get over to the bowling alley... also learning what happens in a relationship when you talk about yourself too much or don’t share at all, or when advice is helpful and when it is not.”
For Natalie, being a student counsellor was not just about creating change at the individual level. It was also about forwarding social justice within the community at large. In fact, one of the challenges that Natalie faced as a student counsellor was dealing with the realization that despite the desire of clients to change, society would not provide the financial resources or will to support such change. For example, when working as a practicum student at the women’s prison, Natalie commented that “there was one chemical dependency counsellor for 197 women, 95% of which were chemically dependent. It was like offering one loaf of bread to 100 people. You can say you gave them food but what did you really do? Most people just don’t seem to understand you can’t punish someone into being a good person. They need encouragement, modelling, and evidence that they can find personal significance and belonging. Likewise with adults with mental illness. We knew how to help just about everyone but [we didn’t have the finances and resources to do so].

Natalie also found the student counsellor experience to be personally challenging. For example, Natalie’s own process of self-exploration as a counselling student was both “terrifying” and “exciting.” She had to explore her own beliefs, analyze her own lifestyle, and engage in her own therapeutic experience. For Natalie, engaging in constant self-exploration enabled her to feel that she was “walking her talk” when working with clients. As Natalie described, “I really like being held to the same standard...doing what you are asking your client to conquer...[doing or saying something] really smart [with a client] and realizing I should live by that too!” Another challenging aspect to being a counselling student for Natalie was discovering that she didn’t just impact her clients, but the her clients impacted herself as well. For example, Natalie noticed that when she and other student counsellors began to work with individuals in distressing situations, “[our] own lives start to shift and certain things start falling apart...The changes that [we] needed started coming to the surface.” As Natalie reasoned:
I remember running this one group and having this really angry and scary woman sitting there intimidating the whole group... I had to excuse myself to go to the bathroom and put my therapist hat back on again because I was just dissolving into being afraid of this person too. ...It isn't the therapist doing something to the client, there's a much larger interaction going on. This person is changing me too and sometimes that was really hard. Sometimes there were things that I didn't really want to know about myself that I had to learn. I don't regret any of that, but it was hard...[Becoming a counselor] gave me the courage to make difficult and necessary changes in my own life.”

When asked if she experienced any shifts in beliefs or changes in perceptions about humanity when she became a student counsellor, Natalie expressed that she developed a “profound respect for people's ability to survive.” She also experienced tragedy and humour as being surprisingly close together. As Natalie described, “at some point being tragic is tiring and you just have to find a way to laugh.” She also found that over the course of her counselling education program, she matured as a student and found that her initial admiration for her teachers shifted towards a new level of respect that included recognition of their own imperfections. One thing that Natalie greatly appreciated about the instructors at Adler was the fact that the teachers were also counselling practitioners. In other words, “they were keeping what they did fresh and always had current examples. There wasn’t anyone locked in an academic tower telling stories of twenty years ago.”

Once Natalie graduated from Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology in 1991, Natalie worked for a community mental health agency for the next ten years, serving clientele with “serious and persistent mental illness.” Clientele included “people with schizophrenia, people with bipolar disorder, major depression, personality disorders, disassociative disorders, and a few people with a mixture of symptoms we could never totally figure out,
most of whom lived on public assistance.” By her second year, Natalie had been promoted to
a supervisory position over two programs. By her fourth year with the agency, she attained
the position of director of the mental health drop-in centre. For Natalie, working at a non-
profit community mental health agency “was like a social work job with therapy added.” She
experienced the program as being a “one stop mental health shop.” For example, in addition
to the provision of counselling, she helped people to find housing and jobs, she created
connections between her clients and the medical community, and she also taught skills
training programs that enabled her clients to find a way to contribute and belong within their
own community.

Throughout her experience as a professional counsellor, the fundamental philosophy
and principles of Adlerian psychology remained. For example:

What was really nice was as I got to work my way up to director, I really got
to implement the philosophy that I wanted to. I trained the counsellors in
Adlerian philosophy and our community support program was based on it so
that in a lot of simple ways, it had a lot of impact. Like when you’re meeting
a client, people tend to say “My name is Joe and I’m Bipolar.” It was the next
piece of identity after their name. I would tell counsellors, “I don’t want to
hear you asking them their diagnosis. Find out if they like to stir fry, or who is
their favourite action hero is, have another conversation first. If the client
wants to talk with you about their med’s or illness, that’s fine”. I mean, we
did have to do an intake, but in terms of introducing someone to the
community we’d say “this is Sue and she is an artist”... So people starting re-
experiencing their significance as humans from something other than being
mentally ill.
Overall, Natalie described her experience as professional counsellor to be “satisfying” and “very, very fulfilling.” Natalie explained that the reasons why she left the counselling profession had more to do with the profession itself than the client population. First, Natalie found that the vision of Adlerian psychology was neither fully embraced by the profession of therapy nor was it supported financially by society. For example:

I kind of feel that Adlerian psychology got taken hostage by the therapy world...not exactly, because there are still adult education centres...but Adler didn’t see people who were sick as being any different from people who were well...It wasn’t such a separating thing. So when you add all of the world of academia, the accreditation, the insurance industry, and all these other pieces, it makes it really narrow.

For Natalie, the licensing of helping professionals has been useful in so far as defining standards of quality and ethics. Overall, however, Natalie has found that licensing has not accomplished what it set out to do, namely, to ensure client safety and quality therapeutic service. Instead, Natalie experienced licensing in the helping professions as often being an “illusion of safety” and being financially discriminating for “a lot of people who would be incredible helpers, but [the licensing] makes it unaffordable to become one.” In some cases, she found the mental health system design to be “overly focussed on preventing and avoiding liability, rather than involved in the stated focus of helping and serving the intended client.” In Natalie’s experience, she found that “the only real protection we have is our commitments to each other to continue to learn and grow and operate professionally. Feedback, client evaluation, professional support and ongoing training has to be achieved on a level that is much closer to where the service happens...Rules never substitute for developing good judgement and strong trustworthy professional relationships.”
On a similar note, Natalie also witnessed greater layers of separation between the client and the mental health professional the further up the professional was on the career status ladder. As Natalie recalled:

It seemed like the more money they got paid, the more buffers they had built in between themselves and their clients. You had to go through three doors and the security guard to meet with your case manager, or you often had to go through several other people and three months of waiting to reach your psychiatrist. All of those layers of stuff were for the professionals to protect and sustain themselves in doing the work without having to get to close to the people they worked with...Also, the person making the most money spent the least amount of time with the client. The person who spent the most amount of time with the client had the least amount of authority towards helping them. For example, if you’re in court, the psychiatrist that sees the client for half an hour can provide a statement of competence or commitability whereas the counsellor who has seen them for 2 years, offers something but doesn’t have the [same] authority.

Another aspect of the counselling profession that Natalie found challenging was the presence of “wounded” and “cold” therapists. For example, “there were incredible professionals and there are some wounded professionals masking their own woundedness in being a helper.” As working with serious mental illness was sometimes very painful, Natalie found that some therapists became “emotionally distant to their clients” and “went through the motions.” Natalie suggested that the aloofness she occasionally experienced in other therapists pointed to “the huge lack of support for those helping, and a huge lack of permission to need it.” Natalie also pointed to conflicting messages within the therapy profession regarding counsellor self-care. For example, “I think in the helping profession,
there is a message of “take care of yourself, and by the way, could you also do this and this and this.”

Upon review of her experiences as a professional counsellor, Natalie surmised that she would take a “really radical approach to how helping was to happen.” If Natalie had a magic wand, she would have focussed on building successful communities because “that’s where lasting change happens.” Natalie mused that “it would be kind of nice if we had a really terrific spa with a spiritual director!”

In the fall of 2000, Natalie decided that she had gone as far as she could with mental health and decided to look for another avenue of contribution. In December of 2000, Natalie took a job as a telephone employee assistance counsellor. For Natalie, this position primed her for her future in coaching because without the experience of counselling people over the phone, Natalie doubted whether she would have fully accepted the idea that coaching could be as effective over the phone as in person. Also, as the nature of the calls tended to be urgent, Natalie had to “laser beam” her skills as she would only have “one to two chances in that moment to impact [the callers] life.” For Natalie, this experience taught her to be “bold” and to “get to the point.”

After learning about The Coaches Training Institute from a fellow employee assistance counsellor, Natalie attended a complimentary introduction workshop on coaching and immediately decided that coaching was what she wanted to do next. She enrolled in The Coaches Training Institute and completed the five weekend classes. As summarized by Natalie, “I loved my coaches training.” Natalie proclaimed that the training “was probably the best training I’ve ever had. For the amount of time spent…it was dynamic…They taught [coaching] in a way that the learning stayed with me.”

Coaching, as described by Natalie, “gave me the bigger world back.” After working with the mentally ill for the past 12 years, “I didn’t notice the other people…Coaching gave
Upon discovering coaching, Natalie also knew that in comparison to therapy “nothing would feel like working that hard again.” As she described, “I love being a coach. I hang up the phone and 80% of the time I actually say out loud “I love being a coach.”

Natalie discussed three points of similarity between her experience as a student coach and student counsellor. First, Natalie experienced the coaching model to be “hugely Adlerian.” She found the “co-active” approach to coaching to be similar philosophically to Adlerian psychology. For example, both co-active coaching and Adlerian based counselling involved the exploration and identification of one’s core values and beliefs, one’s unique contribution or purpose in life, one’s preferred future, one’s lifestyle choices, and one’s map for life success. In Natalie’s experience, both the co-active coaching and the Adlerian approach to counselling promoted the belief that people are “creative, resourceful, and whole” and that “it’s not what we have that counts, but what we do with what we have that is important.”

Second, Natalie experienced a similarity between the way the co-active model of coaching and the Adlerian approach to counselling was taught. Both schools encouraged the students to bring their own unique styles to their coaching and counselling. She also found the blend of classroom learning with experiential practice to be powerful in both mediums. In coaching school, Natalie was expected to apply the coaching skills that she had learned in the first workshop immediately with a client. Similarly, the counselling school encouraged her to practice her counselling skills with clients relatively early into the program. As in her student counselling experience, Natalie found that the co-active teaching community called on her to examine her own life and to rise up to the standards that she was encouraging her coaching clients to hold for themselves.
Natalie, together with a small group of coaching colleagues, hired a leader from CTI
to facilitate a weekly skills supervision group in which the students would practice coaching
each other in front of the leader and other group participants and receive structured feedback.
Natalie participated in this skill building group for 1.5 years. Like the supervision she
received while at Adler, Natalie found that the difference between mediocrity and mastery of
skills came from receiving and using feedback provided during supervision. Finally, Natalie
found that she had to “unlearn care taking of the client” in both schools. As she explained, “I
had to unlearn a certain amount of care taking as a therapist, and in the second round
[coaching], I had to unlearn even more.”

Although Natalie experienced the Adlerian approach to counselling and the co-active
model of coaching as being similar, she found the profession of counselling to be
experientially different from the profession of coaching in the following five ways. First,
coaching for Natalie was like “Adler on steroids.” As she explained, the main difference
between Adlerian counselling and co-active coaching was in amplitude. Coaching “turns up
the volume on Adlerian philosophy” and “keeps going where the field of therapy would
stop.” For example, with therapy, work with a client typically stops once the client is
functional enough to return to work, when insurance stops paying for therapy, or when the
client decides it’s time to stop. Coaching would pick up a client at this functional place and
help that client move towards personal excellence. As another example of amplitude, Natalie
found that some of the questions on the Adlerian lifestyle assessment were similar to
coaching questions. The difference she found, however, was “if you added about 20 more
powerful questions, you’d have coaching.”

Metaphorically, Natalie experienced therapy as being an ice cream cone and coaching
as being “all the ice cream you could eat.” As she explained:
There’s an ice cream store where you can order something called the Lalapolusa. It’s this huge thing of all the ice cream you could possibly want. You get a medal if you eat it. It’s kind of like therapy is the ice cream cone and coaching is the Lalapolusa. It makes your eyes get big. You’re thinking, wow, I didn’t realize there was so much!

Second, Natalie suggested that the difference in amplitude between counselling and coaching stemmed from the different philosophical stances taken by the two professions. For Natalie, the philosophical message in therapy was “above all else, do no harm.” Such a stance can create cautious and tentative therapeutic work. At times, Natalie experienced therapy as “calling forth the patient” rather than the person. In contrast, Natalie experienced the coaching philosophy to be “above all else, do not hold this person as small.” In turn, Natalie has found that as a coach, she has been called on to “think deeper, bigger, wider”, to help people “get closer to the true elements of who [they] are,” and to coach people towards realizing “how big their life purpose really is.” To further illustrate, when discussing her sense of purpose as a coach in comparison to counsellor, Natalie stated that “as a therapist I wanted to help people find healing so they could reclaim their lives. As a coach, I want to help people recognize their magnificence so they can fully experience their lives, all the way.”

Third, given the differing philosophical stances, Natalie also experienced the coaching profession as having more faith and trust in people’s ability to take care of themselves and handle their own lives. Consequently, she has experienced the coaching profession as being “free of the oppressive part of regulation [found in therapy].” As Natalie commented, “there’s not that parental thing there is in the therapy field” and “I really liked being able to create a more powerful, direct way to be responsible and ensure quality [as a coach].” For example:
In student counselling, you are held back a lot... You are put in a box in terms of “don’t do this until this, and don’t do that until that.” There’s a lot of limitations on what you are supposed to do... In coaching they said, “Go coach! Represent yourself honestly, but go coach!” So they gave the [coaching client] a lot more credit at being able to... make their own decision about whether or not [they] wanted to work with a coach in training.

Similarly, Natalie found that as a coach, she could really trust that the client’s own dreams and life goals were indeed the best fit for the client. Although the therapy field spoke to the importance of valuing the client’s own life vision, Natalie found that in general, there was “too much attention on the therapist’s ability to provide the best assessment...to demonstrate the best counselling skills” and not enough attention on the client as resourceful.

Fourth, as Natalie moved from therapist to coach, she also experienced a change in language “which gave people permission to learn about themselves without having it be judged.” As she explained:

It’s kind of been if you needed to learn about yourself, there’s something wrong and you should have come in knowing this somehow...like expecting you to know algebra without ever having taking it. Coaching is put into a language...a package...that makes development so much more accessible and attractive to people so that they will not feel judged by choosing it...It’s the successful person that seeks further development of their own mastery. It’s not the sick person or the defective person.

Fifth, Natalie has experienced greater ease at establishing balance in her own life as a coach than when she was a therapist. Natalie credits her own maturity and the encouragement from the coaching profession for coaches to engage in “extreme self care.”

To illustrate:
I schedule my coaching calls at the time when I’m the most vibrant coach. If the time doesn’t fit [the potential coaching client], then I will help that client to find someone else. I really honor [my own self-care] all the way. In a therapy world, there’s a sense that you’re supposed to or ought to work with everyone. If a therapist is really good and adept, then that therapist will be all things to all people. [Coaching] has helped me to see that it’s actually more powerful to know who [I am] and what people [I can best help].

When asked to describe how coaching was impacted by her previous experience as a therapist, Natalie stated that coaching was “a natural progression of things for me...I probably needed one to have the other.” As she explained, “I’m sure I needed my own healing process and maturity to reach a certain place where I wasn’t so darn sensitive about myself...I think having been a therapist, counseling supervisor, and an instructor of clinical assessment prepared me enormously for becoming a coach.” As Natalie noted, “I have a pretty keen eye for figuring out who a good candidate for coaching is and who may not be.”

On that note, Natalie explored her experience of who is an appropriate candidate for coaching and who is not. For Natalie, the appropriateness of candidacy was based on skills that the client possessed as opposed to the coaches’ ability to diagnose and assess. For example, in Natalie’s experience, a good coaching candidate was someone who could “tolerate self observation and self awareness,” “imagine the future,” and be able to generate “a vision for their own life.” A coaching candidate for Natalie would also have to exhibit “an interest using core values and personal dreams to guide one’s personal development.”

Currently, in addition to running a private life coaching practice, Natalie has returned to Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology where she now teaches a coaching track for students enrolled in the MA counselling psychology program as well as coaching courses for students pursuing a coaching certificate. In keeping with her Adlerian roots, Natalie believes
that coaching is for “the masses.” One of main reasons why Natalie chose to teach coaching at the university was to make coaching affordable for more people. While teaching at Adler, Natalie has chosen to keep coaching and therapy separate. For example:

The way I explain it is if you’re a therapist using a coaching tool, you’re still a therapist. It’s the relationship or the container that determines what you’re doing. I know that [there are some people] who will start with a client as their therapist and then [over time] say that they are the client’s coach. I think it’s possible, but I don’t think that it’s easy. I don’t think everyone is adept at that. Suppose your mother says she wants to be just friends. Would you just become friends and complete surpass the fact that she is your mother? No, you can’t. The nature of your relationship will shift and change, but the [old relationship] will always be there.

In her experience, coaching and counselling can be distinguished by the relationship or “the container” created between herself and the client and the goal that the client enters the relationship with. For example:

The coaching container is for someone who wants more in his or her life, or is dissatisfied and wants to create change...Coaching can have therapeutic benefits because if you are stuck in your life and you feel kind of depressed about that, getting unstuck is going to relieve your depression. But you didn’t go into coaching to relieve your depression. It’s a side effect rather than the focal point. [Whereas], the entry goal into therapy is to treat the depression so you can get unstuck.

In conclusion, Natalie emphasizes to her students that she does not see coaching and counselling as an “either or” choice. Rather, she views coaching and counselling as being equally important and useful practices along the continuum of mental health and personal
development. She has also found that coaches with a background in counselling have an easier time identifying where clients are on the continuum, given their foundational schooling in human development, behaviour, and mental health. Finally, when looking to the future of coaching and counselling, Natalie proclaimed that “it would be a crying shame if the government took over the field of coaching to regulate it and placed it into the field of therapy. That would be giving one professional area the corner market on human development and change, and that would be a shame. It would be nice if we just trusted that people will figure out what would serve them best when they are given the information they need to evaluate their choices.”

Rambo

Rambo is a 40-year old male who lives in Connecticut, USA. He is a pharmacist, personal life coach, and former counsellor. In 1997, Rambo completed a Master of Arts degree in Counselling and Psychotherapy from the Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology. He also completed the five-core course with the Coaches Training Institute in 2001. Currently, Rambo works full time as a pharmacist and part time as a coach in private practice. Prior to enrolling in the counselling program at Adler, Rambo worked full time as a pharmacist. When Rambo decided to return to school to pursue a counselling degree, Rambo remembered feeling “pretty scared” about making a transition from pharmacist to counsellor. Initially, Rambo was concerned as to whether he would be able to relate to people as a counsellor instead of as a pharmacist. Upon reflection of his own personal growth and previous personal experience with therapy, Rambo realized that becoming a counsellor “was within me...I just hadn’t tapped into it yet.”

Rambo’s schooling consisted of course work spread over 2 years in addition to a nine-month internship. Rambo studied Adlerian tenants of psychology, namely, social interest and lifestyle analysis. He also was required to take courses in abnormal psychology, human
Rambo also completed the courses within the program’s Marriage and Family Counselling track such as systems theory. Upon graduation, Rambo successfully completed the exam in order to become a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Minnesota.

Rambo’s most memorable experiences as a student counsellor occurred during his practicum and internship. As a practicum student, Rambo worked at a drop-in centre for people with “severe and persistent mental illness.” In the beginning, working with mentally ill clients was “nerve wracking,” “challenging,” and “overwhelming” for Rambo. He felt “flooded” by all the new information that he was learning as a student counsellor and struggled to assimilate it. As he stated “all this info that I was trying to settle into my body...wasn’t really mine yet.” As Rambo alternated between the assimilation of information and the practice of new counselling skills, he remembered “holding pretty tight to the tenants of Adlerian psychology.” For example, when Rambo worked with counselling clients, he “looked for how people exhibited social interest in their lives, [inquired about] their early memories and early recollections, [and explored] what kind of beliefs they had about themselves and what they wanted to do in their lives.” Rambo discovered early on in his counselling practicum that he had an affinity for “seeing the whole picture” and was good at “summarizing” the client’s story.

During his counselling training, Rambo also experienced a change in belief about mental illness. As he explained, before attending counselling school, “I had a lot of rules about how people should behave...how they should exist in the world.” But once Rambo began working with clients who had serious mental health challenges, he started to believe that people with mental illness couldn’t just “get over” or “choose not to have their depression or their schizophrenia.” Despite the mental challenges that his clients faced,
Rambo was amazed at “how they would function...and be able to participate in their world.” As he explained, “that was very enlightening and kind of eye opening for me.” In fact, Rambo felt “very honored to have witnessed client’s growth...it was a privilege.”

On a similar note, Rambo experienced making a difference in the lives of his counselling clients. He felt that he was “giving back something important.” In return, Rambo noticed that not only did he have an impact on his clients, “but as the relationship [with the clients] deepened and I got to know them better, then I also changed with them.” Although Rambo felt changed by his clients, he also found that his ability to “remain unattached” and avoid “taking on people’s problems” strengthened as he developed as a student counsellor.

The internship phase of Rambo’s training program presented its own unique challenges and successes. For his internship, Rambo worked with “the Neighborhood Involvement Program” at a mental health centre for nine months. The centre had “a good reputation” and serviced mostly “lower income people.” Rambo appreciated the fact that the centre had a “Clothes Closet” program where donated clothes and furniture were given to needy clients. Overall, Rambo described working at the centre as being the “highlight” of his counselling training experience. He enjoyed having the opportunity to work with colleagues who had different levels of education including students pursing their MA, PsyD, and Ph.D. degrees. He found the group discussions amongst the students and supervisors to be “very, very interesting.” Rambo also developed friendships with some of the other students in the internship program and enjoyed “watching the other students grow and change.”

Rambo faced several challenges as an intern. First, Rambo experienced his school supervisor to be “aloof,” “introverted,” and “standoffish.” Consequently, Rambo did not feel that he had a good connection with his own supervisor. Second, Rambo found the writing of treatment plans and case notes to be “hard” because he had to write the documents with
consideration as to how a court of law might read them. Third, Rambo co-facilitated a grief therapy group for pre-teen and early teenagers (grade 6 to 8). For Rambo, co-facilitation of this particular group went from "ungratifying to okay." He was disappointed in the lack of appreciation demonstrated by the kids for the amount of work he put into the preparation and running of the group. Furthermore, he was frustrated by the fact that not all of the kids would return to the group and that teachers would keep adding new kids to the program at random intervals throughout the group process. Consequently, Rambo remembered thinking at that time "this is the first, and last group that I am ever going to do!"

After completing the internship and graduating from the counselling program, Rambo remembered feeling like he was "an open book," "still unfinished," and had "more learning and growing to do." Despite the difficulty Rambo experienced while running the therapy group for kids, Rambo stayed on at the centre for another three years. He worked 20 hours per week at the centre, spending 50% of his time conducting individual therapy and the other 50% as a co-therapist for couple's therapy.

Over the years while working as a professional counsellor at the centre, Rambo experienced a shift in his therapeutic orientation and corresponding worldview. As a counsellor, Rambo became more curious about the future of his clients and engaged less in the analysis of their pasts. For example, "I started to see that I was less interested in what was inside the box and delving deeper into why a client [was the way he was]...and began to look more outside the box and ask questions such as "well, where do you want to go from here?"" At about the same time, Rambo began to learn about Solution Focussed Therapy and was impressed by a book titled "Do One Thing Different" by Bill O’Hanlon, a solution focussed therapist.

After three years of working as a counsellor and licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Rambo moved his family back to where he grew up as a child in the US. At the
same time, his mother passed away unexpectedly. To help deal with his grief and the many recent changes in his life, Rambo decided to leave the counselling profession in order to return to work full time as a pharmacist. This decision also enabled his wife to reduce her work hours. During this year of transition, a former colleague from Adler who had been training with The Coaches Training Institute, told Rambo “you would be good at this...coaching is for you.” Together with the encouragement from another friend who was a leader with CTI, Rambo enrolled in the coach training program and completed the five core courses.

Rambo’s experience as a student counsellor and a student coach were similar in the following six ways. First, Rambo experienced “the flood” of new information just as had experienced when he was a counselling student five years previously. As Rambo described, he felt “consciously incompetent” at being a coach just as he had originally felt when he was new counselling student. Second, Rambo experienced similar excitement at meeting new people, although he felt the friendships he made while in coaching school were “deeper.” Third, being a student counsellor and student coach were both “terrifying” experiences for Rambo. He remembered having to “feel the fear and step into [both counselling and coaching] despite the fear.” Accompanying the fear in both cases was the sense of excitement. For Rambo, counselling was “fun” and coaching was “exhilarating.” Forth, he found both programs of study to be personally challenging, however, he experienced the coaching program as demanding more of his own personal development. As Rambo stated, “there was a personal satisfaction for both, but more so in coaching because it was more of what I wanted in my own life.” For example, Rambo was required to identify his own core values in both programs, but where the counselling program encouraged the identification of his values, the coaching program encouraged Rambo to live his life aligned with those values. Fifth, he also found a similarity between the Adlerian and coaching philosophy in so far as
both emphasized a holistic lifestyle approach to working with people. Finally, he noticed an overlap between the tenant of solution focussed therapy to look towards the future and a principle of co-active coaching called “forward the action.”

When reflecting on the differences between his experiences as a student counsellor and student coach, Rambo identified five points of distinction. First, Rambo metaphorically described his experience of the two roles as being “an expert” for counsellor and “a fellow traveller” for coach. To further illustrate, Rambo explained that as a student and as a professional counsellor, he felt a greater sense of “responsibility” and “pressure” to “fix” his clients. For example, he found himself trying to “figure things out” and “come up with the right answer” as a counsellor. When Rambo began his coach training, one of the things he had to unlearn was the desire to solve clients’ problems. Instead, Rambo was encouraged to help a client find his or her own life path and “challenge that person to stay on course.”

Second, Rambo found that in general, therapy tended to “look at what was wrong and coaching looked at what was right.” For example, as a student and professional counsellor Rambo experienced an “unwritten rule” that “people are broken…are damaged…have wounds…[and therefore] need to work through what they have experienced.” In contrast, Rambo was taught in coaching school to believe that “people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole.”

With a shift in the locus of control from helper to client, and a change in perspective about the resourcefulness of the client, Rambo experienced more freedom as a student and professional coach than he did as a student and profession counsellor. For example, a third major difference between coaching and counselling for Rambo was a sensed permission to be more powerful, challenging, and bold as a coach than as a counsellor. For example, as a coach, Rambo found himself “interrupting” the client’s story more often in order to help the client “get to the point.” He also found himself developing a “no nonsense kind of attitude”
and “more of an edge” to his coaching practice than was present in his counselling practice. Fourth, he experienced greater permission in coach training school to make mistakes than in counselling school. Finally, being a coach for Rambo felt “more natural” and “less standoffish” than his experience as a counsellor. As Rambo described:

There is a standoffishness as a counsellor, as in “I’m the expert and you can’t really call me at home, and you can’t be a part of my life, and you can’t know about my family, and you can’t know anything about me but I get to know everything about you…” It’s very one-way, up to down….and coaching is not that way at all…my clients know about me, or they know my wife…it’s a different scenario…the rules aren’t so rigid [in coaching]…it just feels more natural.

In conclusion, Rambo conceded that had it not been for the groundwork already established as a student and professional counsellor, he doubted whether he would have been capable of “jumping into the coaching.” For Rambo, the leap personally and professionally would “have been too large.” Rambo also credited his student counselling experience as being the validating factor in his quest to work with people. When Rambo decided to become a counsellor, “that was a turning point [in my] life.” Finally, as Rambo described, “I feel honored that I have been given a chance to be in a relationship with someone for their own betterment” in both counselling and coaching.

Coachdvd

Coachdvd is a 55-year old male who resides in California, USA. He obtained a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology from John F. Kennedy University, California in 1977 and a Ph.D. in Psychology from The Professional School of Psychology, San Francisco in 1987. He is also a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach, having competed his training with The Coaches Training Institute (CTI) in 2001. Currently, Coachdvd operates under a
variety of occupational titles including personal coach, certification supervisor for CTI, licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counsellor, writer, teacher of therapy and psychological assessment courses, and coordinator of the Coaching Certificate Program for the continuing education department at John F. Kennedy University. Coachdvd described 40% of his workload as being related to personal coaching and 20% of his workload as being related to counselling/therapy.

Coachdvd has over 20 years experience working as an individual and group psychotherapist and as a Marriage, Family and Child Counsellor. Prior to his formal graduate training in counselling psychology, Coachdvd worked for 8 years in residential treatment centres with emotionally disturbed kids. As Coachdvd reminisced, “I have lived a real rich life as a clinician...I’ve been a therapist for 20 years so I know all the ins and outs. I have hauled people off to hospitals when they were crazy, I’ve worked with schizophrenics, people with autism, normal neurotics, and geniuses. That wealth of experience has made me a very good therapist.” Currently, Coachdvd is no longer accepting new therapy clients but is continuing to provide psychotherapy for his long-term clients.

As Coachdvd had been working as a counsellor for 8 years prior to enrolling in the counselling psychology graduate program in 1977, Coachdvd remembered entering the program with “curiosity,” “arrogance,” and “annoyance.” He was curious to learn what academia could teach him about the profession in which he had already been practising. He was arrogant in that he thought he knew everything there was already to know about therapy. Finally, he felt annoyed at having to go through academic hoops in order to become accredited in a field that he already felt proficient at. It wasn’t until entering the Ph.D. program did Coachdvd feel overwhelmed with the amount of knowledge he had yet to acquire. As Coachdvd recalled, “it was wonderful. All of a sudden I could be overwhelmed, curious and amazed in a real true learning environment. I could learn everything I wanted to
learn about psychology.” For Coachdvd, the most exciting thing about his counselling psychology educational experience was learning about new theory. As explained by Coachdvd, “I would love finding compelling theories that explained psychodynamics that would satisfy me at a very deep level.” When asked about his experience working with clients during his counselling practicum, Coachdvd explained that the clients represented the full continuum of mental health, but in general, most of his clientele were “mentally unwell.”

During the years of 2000 - 2001, Coachdvd became a student coach with The Coaches Training Institute. Coachdvd experienced a radical difference in the way material was taught and how knowledge was acquired as a student counsellor in comparison to student coach. Where graduate school stimulated an excitement to learn new things for Coachdvd, coach training stimulated an excitement to practice new things. According to Coachdvd, the instructors at The Coaches Training Institute taught very little content. Coachdvd stated that “it was mostly experiential, so much more experiential than any other learning environment I’ve ever been in.” Coachdvd learned about coaching by practicing coaching skills on fellow students and by experiencing himself as a coaching client. As Coachdvd explained, he learnt how to become a coach by “living it.” For example, Coachdvd compared the high point of his educational experience as a counselling student to that of a coaching student:

The high point of my [psychology] education...was my first class taught by this woman who was dyslexic, had a Ph.D. in Psychology and was a MD. She taught psychophysiology and she would bring brains in for us to look at. I mean, oh my god, there’s so much to know!...That was the opportunity to do a whole lot of learning...She sparked my curiosity to rise up and learn as much as I could. [In comparison], the high point of my coaching training experience was sitting on the floor in front of this woman who was a fellow coach, learning just like I was, and she says “So let’s cut the crap [Coachdvd], what
are you here to do?” and I said for the first time in my life “I want to be a writer.” I burst into tears because I had never said that out loud before. Now I’ve already published one non-fiction book and I’m currently in the middle of a mystery novel. And that’s just the outer form. The inner form is that my whole life is oriented around my writing which is my deepest passion…and it stemmed from sitting on the floor with [that student coach] and answering her question. In that moment, I discovered the power of coaching.

To further illustrate the learning experience as a student counsellor and student coach, Coachdvd described counselling school as being “hierarchical” and coaching school as being “experiential.” For Coachdvd, the acquisition of knowledge was:

contained by the [counselling] instructor and dolled out to the student…Coach training was not hierarchical…coaching has it’s own intelligence to it. In psychology, the intelligence is embodied in teachers, professors, supervisors that pass the knowledge on. But in coaching, it’s like…coaching is the field itself. I was sitting down with someone who had as much coaching experience as I did…and she radically changed my life. So there is something about coaching that doesn’t require years and years of expertise in order to be brilliant…I think it’s because [coaching] is not about transferable knowledge, but [is instead], about being absolutely open to the experience of the moment that gives [coaching] it’s power.

Entering the coach-training program after working as a therapist for over 20 years was both a “humbling” and “humiliating” experience for Coachdvd. Once Coachdvd had completed the five weekend CTI courses, Coachdvd enrolled in the 6-month CTI certification program that included supervision. For Coachdvd, supervision was a powerful experience as both a counselling and coaching student. As he described, “the most useful thing is having
someone watch and listen to your work and having comments. Direct supervision is the most powerful, true for both [counselling and coaching].” For example, after listening to Coachdvd’s first audiotaped session with a coaching client, his supervisor said “that was a very nice therapy session [Coachdvd], but it has nothing to do with coaching!” It was after this supervision session that Coachdvd remembered feeling like he would have to “start from scratch” in order to learn how to become a coach.

For Coachdvd, “starting from scratch” meant having to “unlearn” five “habits” that, according to the Coaches Training Institute, were deemed to be more appropriate for therapy than coaching. As Coachdvd explained, “[my supervisor] and the whole coaching enterprise continually had me facing my habits. And my habits weren’t coaching. My habits were therapeutic.” First, Coachdvd experienced a change in clientele when he transitioned from therapist to student coach. As a therapist, he experienced his clients as being primarily “dysfunctional” whereas in coaching, he experienced his clients as being “mentally healthy.” For example, Coachdvd explained that he felt “more scared as a student of psychotherapy because you’re working with scarier things. It’s not as scary being a student coach because you’re working with mentally healthy people.”

Second, while working with mentally healthy clients as a coaching student, Coachdvd began to integrate into his own belief system the philosophy taught at The Coaches Training Institute, namely that “people are naturally creative, resourceful and whole.” In accordance with this new perception about people, Coachdvd found that he had to “unlearn” a therapeutic propensity for giving advice. As Coachdvd explained:

Therapy is a lot about advice, I mean we subtly [provide advice]…I believe it has an essential role. I mean if I’m working with an addict, that guy needs a lot of advice because he doesn’t know how to live his life. He’s not creative, resourceful, and whole and he’s heading as fast as he can over the cliff. What
he needs from me is to grab a hold of him, pull him back, and for me to say this is what you’re doing with every hour of the next 10 hours of your life.
And that’s fine. There is an absolute important role for that...[But] here’s where I draw the line. Therapy is for mentally ill people...Mentally ill people actually need someone who is mentally healthy and skilful to help them.
Coaching is for mentally healthy people, they don’t need [direct advice on how to live]...Coaching is a completely different enterprise.”

When asked if he saw his therapy clients as creative, resourceful, and whole, Coachdvd responded:

Hell yes, because they better be after 10 years of psychotherapy! So yeah, I definitely see them as creative, resourceful, and whole because they have kind of grown up, and I get to celebrate them growing up. But if I had a brand new [therapy] client, I would be looking with my brand new [therapy] client what’s not working in their life. When I have a brand new [coaching] client, I’m looking at what is working in their life.

Third, to further illustrate the difference in direction that Coachdvd was taught to employ when working with coaching clients in comparison to when working with counselling clients, Coachdvd explained:

The biggest habit is quite simply, looking at what’s wrong as a therapist and what’s right as a coach. Now certainly as a coach you’ll look at what’s wrong, and as a therapist you’ll look at what’s right, but the habit looks at different directions. When a therapeutic client comes through with a problem, I’m putting that within the context of all the other problems that the client has solved. When a coaching client comes through with a problem, I’m trying to figure out how to put them in a state of mind where they can imagine that
problem solved and then have them teach themselves what the solution is.
Both of those are very important enterprises, but they require different set of
tools. You know, you wouldn't use a hammer to do brain surgery. You need
to know which tool to use.

Fourth, Coachdvd discovered while participating in coaching supervision that he had
to let go of therapeutic habits that he identified as “empathetic listening” and “fascination
with the client’s story.” For example:

For a therapist, what I’m curious about is the story of the client, and the past of
the client, and the pattern of the past of the client. And I take that information
to support that client in terms of writing the new present out of the old past.
As a coach, I’m curious about the present of the client and the future of the
client. I use the future of the client to help the client write a new present. I
[had] to stop being interested in the past of the client. That required a great
deal of self-management because [as therapists], we have such a fascination
with the past...[which is] primarily irrelevant to coaching...I had to shift my
curiosity from the past and present for a therapy client to the present and
future for a coaching client.

Fifth, Coachdvd experienced a difference in the power dynamics between the coach-
client relationship and the counsellor-client relationship. For Coachdvd, the coaching
relationship is more equal than that of therapist-client:

The psychotherapy relationship by its very nature is unequal. There is a client
who is revealing...and the therapist who is taking the role of a person who
knows how to get mentally healthy... [In comparison], the coach-client
relationship is much more on the same level...a good coach will continually
step out of a position of authority in order to empower the client, in fact, to the
frustration of the client sometimes. As a coach, I continually take the stance that the solution to whatever is going on in the clients’ life lies in the client because [I see] the client as being creative, resourceful, and whole enough to discover themselves. It is none of the coaches’ damn business what they decide to do. And that’s not true of a psychotherapist.

When asked why he found himself caring more about what a therapy client chose to do than a coaching client, Coachdvd responded that he felt more responsibility as a therapist because he experienced his therapy clients as being less capable at helping themselves than his coaching clients. As illustrated by Coachdvd:

You are responsible, you have very good advice to give, and you can see dysfunctional [stuff] happening over there in the psyche of your client. You want them to become aware of that so that they don’t continue to make the same mistakes that they have been making.

With respect to the similarities that Coachdvd experienced as a professional therapist and professional coach, Coachdvd stated that he has remained “totally non-judgmental and unconditional” in both positions. He also acknowledged that if there were any similarities between coaching and counselling, the similarities would be found when examining a type of coaching called “process coaching” and therapy. In process coaching, a coach will explore what the client is experiencing in the moment:

I think [process coaching] is where counselling and coaching look most alike, and there is an inherent difference. The inherent difference is that when you’re doing therapeutic process, your focus is just on the moment. When you’re doing coaching process, you have a tremendous focus on the moment, but there is a little part of you sitting in the corner waiting for the
bounce...and the bounce is an integral part of the coaching process where it isn’t an integral part of therapeutic process.

When asked to describe what he meant by “bounce”, Coachdvd responded:

That’s like if you go all the way down the tube, down to the bottom, and you ask your [coaching] client a question. All of a sudden the client will start to giggle because you’re working with healthy people. At some point healthy people giggle at their miseries. Or they’ll go “wait a minute, that’s not true.” Something shifts. There’s an energetic shift. Whereas in process therapy...you go down and down...and a bounce doesn’t come for a long time.

When asked how he knew when a client was mentally healthy and when a client was not, Coachdvd responded “it’s easy if you’re coach. If you’re coaching your client and three months later and they haven’t budged, then they probably need therapy. It’s not brain surgery. Mentally healthy people will move in three months. But mentally ill people can’t [necessarily] do that.”

Coachdvd identified four main points of difference between how he experienced the profession of counselling and the profession of coaching. First, Coachdvd experienced coaching as being “a practice...that cares about what is important to you and what you’re going to do to get it...there’s no theory in that.” In contrast, Coachdvd experienced psychology as being “a science... based on theories of human behaviour... and symptoms of the psyche” and counselling psychology / therapy as being “the application of theory put into practice.” More specifically, counselling / therapy for Coachdvd is used when:

there’s something going on in the client’s life that is dysfunctional, not necessarily psychopathological, that’s too deep, but something is not working.

By applying theory in a skillful, formal, intelligent way, you can create the
conditions whereby whatever was dysfunctional comes to be understood, whether you understand it through cognitive psychology work or through insight oriented work. In that process, behaviour changes and you become more functional in your life.

To further illustrate, Coachdvd metaphorically described his experience of therapy as a profession and coaching as a profession:

Therapy is like water. I get to be water. I used to call it eight hours of meditation because I get to be this sort of receptive safe place...a receptive field. Sometimes I’m like a challenging intellect that can make connections for them or support them in making connections themselves. [Whereas] coaching is like fire. It takes energy. When a coaching client comes to me with their life, I’m going to be thinking about what can I do, what can I say, what powerful question could I ask that will rock their current small box so that they could see more potential for their life... I’m working harder as a coach. [I think the reason why] coaching requires much more energy for me probably has to do with [the fact that] all of the things I do as a therapist are bone deep in me... After twenty years of being a therapist, I am so unconsciously competent at doing therapy... But with coaching, I have to be a little more conscious.

Second, Coachdvd has experienced a difference in purpose as a counsellor and as a coach. As a therapist, Coachdvd explained that his primary purpose was to generate hope and help people alleviate suffering from their lives:

My purpose as a therapist was... to help people. To help people who were suffering, kind of Buddhist in a particular way. To help them alleviate the suffering... I know that there are people that are alive today... because of the
work we did, or they would have used drugs and alcohol to kill themselves...
That was a very rewarding practice... It was a really rich and wonderful experience... That was a good purpose.

In contrast, Coachdvd described his purpose as a coach as being less about helping and directing people towards healthy change, and more about being present with healthy people as they discover their own resourcefulness and inherent gifts:

"My purpose these days as a coach is, I'm not actually interested in helping my clients... because they don't need any help. I love coaching clients, but they don't need help. A lot of my work as a coach is about being with whatever is in their lives... because I know that the more fully and enriched they can be with whatever is [present in their lives], the clearer their own resourcefulness will come to their own aid in terms of dealing with what needs to be dealt with. As a coach, I am fully there with the celebration of who they are [as human beings] and what they are creating in their life... As a coach, I say quite regularly "I don't have the slightest idea what to do with your problem. What are you going to do?" I'm not holding out any kind of hope like I would as a therapist because as a coach you are coaching hopeful people.

Third, Coachdvd noted a difference in the definition of success as a coach and as a counsellor:

The orientation for coaching is not about what happens in the hour, the orientation in psychotherapy is about what happens in the hour. I mean, ultimately psychotherapy measures itself by behavioural change, but for the most part psychotherapists measure themselves by what happens between them and the client in the therapeutic hour... In therapy, it's about helping [the
therapy client] to gain insight and to watch for how [the therapy client] uses that insight in their life...It’s about helping people to become more hopeful. As a coach, I measure my effectiveness by how radically the client is changing their lives when they are away from me.

Finally, Coachdvd experienced a difference in the pace of change when working with therapeutic clients as opposed to coaching clients:

The reason why I’m in coaching is because it concerns the world. It can create change in the world a hell of a lot faster than any other tool that I have seen. I’ve done organisational consulting, I’ve done therapy, and I’ve done coaching. The frustration I felt, up until coaching, was that change happened slowly. In organisational development, change was glacially slow. In psychotherapy it was slightly faster than organizational development, but it is still years long. Coaching creates radical change.

When asked to reflect on potential areas of danger for practising coaches and practising therapists, Coachdvd offered five cautions for coaches and one suggestion for therapists. First, Coachdvd commented that when he was a student coach, he noticed a tendency for the coaching profession to promote a future oriented optimistic outlook on life at the risk of ignoring or denying legitimate human suffering:

In coach training, there is a bias towards optimism. Although process coaching gives the tools to be fully present to suffering, [I experienced] a bias towards balance and fulfillment coaching...There was definitely more leaning towards the hopeful future instead of the difficult present, and particularly the history of injustice.

As a supervisor of certified coaches, Coachdvd has noticed the tendency for other practising coaches to lean towards optimism. For example:
I see, occasionally, this kind of arrogance that comes with working with mentally healthy people, where you decide that is what the world is about. You can get a little bit to light and bright and cheery and tend to not see, you know, the sadness and suffering of the human condition. We get so oriented towards fulfillment and potential and stuff like that, it becomes, I must say, an American enterprise. "Let’s think positive, move forward"! We can lose clients there by not being able to be with fundamental truths like we’re all going to die, and that there is a great deal of suffering in the world, and that we live in this incredibly privileged society whereas most of the world’s resources are going to very small handful of white people. We forget about gender issues, we forget about transgender issues, we forget about ageism, sexism, racism, and classism. The same trap that psychotherapy can fall into...we become so focussed on the individual that we lose the field, the context of this planet...The gift of psychotherapy is that therapists have the capacity to be with suffering. So that’s good actually, as it allows them to feel the pain of the planet. Whereas in coaching, I think the forward thrust of coaching supports denial and naivete and optimism.

Second, Coachdvd expressed a concern regarding a new type of coaching that has most recently emerged called relationship coaching. In Coachdvd’s experience, relationship coaching and therapy “overlap in a way that is dangerous to the coaching profession.” As Coachdvd explained:

I’m a licensed Marriage, Family, and Child Counsellor. I have done marriage, family, and child counselling for 20 years. I’ll be damned if I can tell the difference between coaching relationships and doing marriage counselling. So, I think we’re in danger of doing therapy without a license...and getting
sued. Doing coaching with individuals...[is not] a problem because when we
are coaching individuals, we are definitely using different tools, we have
different focuses, and we are working with different problems [than a therapist
working with an individual client]. [However], I've listened to [audiotaped]
excerpts of relationship coaching, and you could just pick it up and plunk it
into a marriage-counselling course.

When asked to further explain why he felt concerned about relationship coaching,
Coachdvd suggested that coaches are not trained to identify dysfunctional patterns or assess
root causes of dysfunction:

Working with a couple in marriage counselling is one of the hardest things in
psychotherapy to do...The best way that I can help a couple is to help them
see the dysfunctional patterns that they learned from their parents and have
reproduced in their [current] relationship. Once they understand that picture,
they can begin to change the way they interact and communicate with each
other...This is totally inappropriate work for coaches...I suppose if a coach
could purely stay in the present and the future and do work on designed
alliance and values, you could squeak through. But when your couple is
fighting in front of you...good luck.

Third, over the years as counsellors began to professionalize by creating insurance
programs and licensing requirements, Coachdvd experienced the movement towards
professionalism as being “castrating”:

I believe the whole insurance racket destroyed therapy. It really castrated
therapists. They became more and more professional. All of a sudden people
are judging therapy, and [consequently], therapy had to become much more
perfect, more scrupulous about our relationships with clients, more careful
with our boundaries, avoid exposing too much [of ourselves] because that’s unprofessional. Soon therapists became more like cold fish robots in order to fit into the profession.

Consequently, Coachdvd hopes that coaches will avoid following the same path of professionalism that counsellors took. As stated by Coachdvd, “I hope coaching will always be a profession of renegades...without licensing.” Coachdvd conceded that coaching without insurance and licensing would mean that “there will be a lot of crappy coaches out there” and consequently, a buyer’s beware burden would be placed on the public. However, Coachdvd reasoned that without insurance related restrictions, coaching could also be known as “an arena of maximum creativity and possibility.”

Fourth, the only form of “professional stabilizing” that Coachdvd recommended for coaches to integrate into their practices was a commitment to ongoing supervision.

Coachdvd contended that the supervision that he received while as a counselling student was slightly more personalized given the fact that he only received nine hours of supervision in coaching school and years of supervision while in counselling graduate school:

There’s something a little more intimate that happens in the supervision in counselling than that which happens in coaching. When you’ve been with a supervisor for a couple of years, they really get to know you and your work, so that can be really supportive.

On the same line, Coachdvd recommended that the coaching community match the counselling community’s ongoing commitment to individual and group supervision, even after training school is complete. As recalled by Coachdvd, if a counsellor has “a really tough client or something you’ve never worked with before, you can hire an individual supervisor to supervise your work so you can learn how to manage this kind of client.” As
Coachdvd experienced, having another person listen to and watch his work as a counsellor and as a coach, kept him wanting to grow and become a better counsellor and therapist:

    After supervision, nobody ever sees a coach’s work again. I think we get sloppy. I know that once I became a supervisor for CTI, my coaching became crisper and precise because all of a sudden I was listening to other coaches. I started to supervise myself and I could see what was correct and what was lazy. I think coaches are kind of lazy around professional development, you know. They’ll go to… feel good workshops and they’ll go to chant someplace and have a real good nice experience, but once they get through supervision, its like phew – no one has to listen to me again… Having someone listen to you… is the most powerful way to grow and continue to grow as a coach.

Coachdvd suggested that by working with a supervisor and by becoming aware of one’s own biases and assumptions about human behavior, a coach would be in a better position to know when a client is out of one’s depth. As Coachdvd stated, “a potential problem exists for coaches when coaches [assume they can coach anyone] and so they try to coach someone through their recovery. Refer that client to a therapist or get some more people on your team!”

When discussing the field of counselling, Coachdvd had one main point of concern for counsellors. He suggested that just as coaches should refer mentally unhealthy clients to therapists, therapists in turn should refer mentally healthy clients to coaches. In Coachdvd’s experience, “there’s an arrogance amongst therapists that they can handle anything” too. With such a belief, Coachdvd has found that some therapists have tried to get into coaching without any prior coach training. This has resulted in an ineffective application of an “old therapeutic tool box” to a new kind of client. Taken to the extreme end, Coachdvd suggested that therapists could even be at risk of damaging mentally health people “by trying to find out
what's wrong and how they're going to fix them.” As he explained, “You can make somebody mentally ill. Just keep telling them they're mentally ill or treating them that way.”

Finally, when asked if he found any benefit to having both a counselling and coaching background when working with coaching clients, Coachdvd replied that having the two backgrounds is “handy, but not a requirement.” Coachdvd attested that he would occasionally put on “his counselling hat” when working with coaching clients. For example, when he was working with a recently divorced mother who was complaining about the behaviour of her child, Coachdvd stepped out of his coaching role and stepped into a counsellor role by pointing out dysfunctional patterns in the family that were apparent in this particular clients’ life. Coachdvd stated that he rarely steps out of the therapist role when working with therapy clients. He has, however, “fired” therapy clients when they were no longer mentally unhealthy and recommended that they consider transitioning to coaching.

Comprehensive Narrative

After repeatedly reviewing the significant statements extracted from the individual narratives, and then comparing the meaning of those statements across participants, ten themes have emerged from the data. First, upon entrance into their graduate counselling programs, participants experienced a range of emotions as counselling students. For two of the participants, becoming a student counsellor was both “thrilling” and “exciting.” For example, one stated that “after searching a long time in my life to find what I wanted to do, becoming a student in the counselling program was a thrilling experience.” Similarly, another experienced an “intuitive interest” in counselling and found that the “whole program [was] excellent.” Several of the participants felt “overwhelmed” by the amount of new knowledge that they were trying to assimilate. In particular, a participant who was a pharmacist prior to entering the program found that the transition to student counsellor was a “scary” undertaking. On the other hand, other participants felt confident about their
capabilities as new student counsellors given their previous counselling experience prior to enrolling in graduate school. For example, one participant who had been working as a therapist for eight years before entering graduate school felt “annoyed” at having to go through academic hoops in order to become accredited in a profession that he felt he was already proficient.

Second, all participants agreed on the importance of friendships established with colleagues and professional relationships formed with professors and supervisors. For example, “what made my experience as a counselling student so superior were the connections established with several professors and classmates;” “I developed friendships with some of the other students in the counselling program…and enjoyed watching the other students grow and change;” “I treasured the friendships with colleagues made during my school years and maintained to date”. The quality of instruction provided by professors ranged from superior to mediocre. For example, the student from the University of British Columbia was “thrilled with the experience and calibre of the professors” and “level of instruction” that she received as a student. In fact, the most important experience as a student counsellor was “the credibility of the people that were teaching me.” Likewise, one of the participants who attended the Adler Graduate School of Psychology appreciated the fact that the instructors were counselling practitioners who “were keeping what they did fresh and always had current examples...there wasn’t anyone locked in an academic tower telling stories of twenty years ago.” On the other hand, one participant experienced the teaching style to be “hierarchical…the acquisition of knowledge was contained by the instructor and dolled out to the student.” Another participant found, on occasion, that some of the instructors demonstrating particular approaches to counselling were “awful therapists.”

Although all participants agreed on the importance of having supervision during their counselling practicums, the quality of supervision ranged from exceptional to disappointing.
Several participants experienced a team atmosphere regarding case consultations. For example, “group discussions amongst the students and supervisors were very, very interesting.” One participant “always felt that there was permission to make mistakes, to bring creativity into the counselling session, and to add fun where therapeutically appropriate.” On the other hand, one participant described a school supervisor as being “aloof,” “introverted,” and “stand-offish.”

Third, the student counsellor-client relationship was an important experience for all participants. During their counselling practicums, all participants expressed working with a range of clientele. However, four of the five participants worked mostly with clientele who had “serious and persistent mental illness”. For example, one participant worked with “seriously mentally ill adults” at a mental health centre as well as with incarcerated women of whom “ninety-five percent were chemically dependent.” Another described his clientele as “representing the full continuum of mental health, but in general, most were mentally unwell.” Given one participant’s previous background in psychiatric nursing, she found that most of the clientele assigned to her as a practicum student were “really ill and really troubled. The clients came as a spill over from a psychiatric walk in clinic...so there were people who had serious mental illness, there were the worried well, and sort of everything in between...the ones they funnelled to me all tended to be pretty ill.” Another participant also worked with “clients who had serious mental health challenges” as well as with financially disadvantaged people. Only the participant from the University of British Columbia experienced her clientele as having “the more common pedestrian challenges that are presented to us all.” As this participant counselled students who attended the university, she found that the majority of the issues that her clientele presented were related to “transition.” For example, “students are typically going through transition. They are either new to school, or exiting school, or they are defining their careers as a result of their experiences there.” If a
client's presenting issues were in the "psychiatric realm" such as "severe manic depression, chronic depression, or psychosis," then this student was able to consult with and refer to a psychiatrist at the university hospital.

The students' perception of their role or purpose as student counsellors ranged from being "a witness" to being "an expert." Part of this range was reflected in the variety of the students' theoretical orientations. Three of the participants experienced an "eclectic" presentation and practice of counselling theories. The two students who attended the Adler Graduate School of Psychology were trained primarily in the "Adlerian tenants of counselling" which were, in brief, to help people find ways to contribute in socially useful ways and to belong in society. For one of the Adlerian students, a large part of her work as a counsellor involved "witnessing a client's expression of emotion." Part of that witnessing involved "encouraging people to become more honest and forgiving in their own lives." Another participant also expressed enjoyment at being able to "witness progress and change for the betterment of the client." The Adlerian student also experienced herself as being a "reframer," "a worker for social justice," "an educator," and "a teacher" of life skills. All five participants agreed on the importance of "empathetic listening" as a counsellor.

There was also a range in the locus of control experienced by the participants during their student counsellor-client relationships. For example, one participant stated that he experienced the counselling relationship to be "by its very nature unequal...there is a client who is revealing...and the therapist who is taking the role of a person who knows how to get mentally healthy." Given the severity of the mental health issues that the majority of the participants were dealing with as student counsellors, many felt a heightened sense of "responsibility" to ensure the welfare of their clients. For example, one participant recalled feeling an enormous amount of "responsibility" and "pressure" to "figure things out," "come up with the right answers," and "fix" his clients when he was a student counsellor. Others,
however, described the counsellor-client relationship as being based more on "mutual respect, equality, and the forming of a partnership." When working with clients as student counsellors, three of the participants described "bringing themselves into the work with a client." A few were encouraged to be up front about their own values when working with a client and one participant remembered sharing analogies drawn from her own life experience with clientele.

Within the student counsellor-client relationship, all participants experienced being personally impacted by their clients. For example, one participant noticed that when she and her colleagues started to work with distressed clients, "our own lives started to shift and certain things started to fall apart...the changes that [we] needed started coming to the surface." As further described, "it isn't just the therapist doing something to the client, there's a much larger interaction going on. This person is changing me too. And sometimes that was really hard. Sometimes there were things that I didn't really want to know about myself that I had to learn." Another participant shared her experience of coordinating an international student program when tragically, an international student committed suicide. As she expressed, "I was heart broken...so my response was to seek counselling for myself so that I could work through my own grieving process."

Many of the participants' beliefs about humanity also changed as a result of having been in relationship with counselling clients. For example, one participant developed "a profound respect for people's ability to survive." Another participant was often surprised at "how [people with mental illness] would function...and be able to participate in their world...that was very enlightening and kind of eye opening for me." Several of the participants discussed a growing awareness of their own privilege and a propensity towards arrogance. For example, one participant described how she became more appreciative of the
diversity in people's life experiences, expectations, and values as a result of being a student counsellor.

Fourth, the majority of the participants made the transition from student to professional counsellor with confidence. For example, one of the Adlerian students felt confident that she knew what she was doing as a counsellor because the "philosophical foundation [in school] was really strong...you knew why you're doing what you're doing and you had a specific structure that you could follow." The student from UBC also felt confident about her counselling training in part due to "the credibility of the people that were teaching me" and the "mentorship" that she received from several professors throughout her entire program. For one of the participants, who had previous work experience as a mental health counsellor prior to attending graduate school, the counselling training program "confirmed" and "validated" her existing skills. The participant with the least amount of previous counselling experience graduated with confirmation that he was in the right field of work. He also felt "unfinished" and was looking forward to "more learning and growing."

For the most part, the theoretical orientation and kind of clientele that the participants worked with as students remained the same as professional counsellors. For example, all participants, except the student from UBC, continued to work primarily with clientele who had "serious and persistent mental illness." Both of the Adlerian students found that the fundamental philosophy and principles of Adlerian psychology continued to inform their work with clients. Both of the Adlerian students and the student from the University of Alberta experienced their professional roles as being a combination of "social work" with "therapy." As one participant described, "working at a non-profit community mental health agency was like a social work job with therapy added". The participant from John F. Kennedy University worked in private practice as a marriage, family, and child counsellor.
The participant from the University of British Columbia continued to serve students in higher education and was later hired as a consultant for an organizational consulting firm.

A fifth theme that emerged from the data, which was common to all participants, was their experience of fundamental differences between coaching and counselling. When comparing their student and professional roles as a counsellor to coach, four key points of distinction were identified. First, all of the participants unanimously agreed that the training to become a counsellor was different than the training to become a coach. Overall, the majority of the participants experienced greater enjoyment in training to become a coach than a counsellor. For example, “I loved my coaches training...it was probably the best training I’ve ever had. For the amount of time spent...it was dynamic...They taught [coaching] in a way that the learning stayed with me;” “Where graduate school stimulated an excitement to learn new things...coach training stimulated an excitement to practice new things;” “I found the coach training to be transformative...it was fun and magical;” “Coach training was exhilarating.”

After working with the mentally ill for the past 12 years, one of the Adlerian students stated that coaching “gave me the bigger world back...I didn’t notice the other [mentally well] people...Coaching gave me the idea of having an impact on all those other people, or the undiagnosed as I call them!” The other Adlerian counsellor remembered feeling “flooded” with new information just like he had experienced as a counselling student. He recalled having to “feel the fear and step into [both counselling and coaching] despite the fear.” He also experienced greater permission with the coach training school to make mistakes. Consequently, he experienced greater “freedom” and “permission to be bold” as a student coach than as a student counsellor.

All of the participants found that the dominant mode of instruction at The Coaches Training Institute was experiential whereas the graduate counselling schools employed a
combination of theoretical and experiential instruction, with more emphasis on theory and research. As the counsellor from John F. Kennedy University stated, “the coach training program was so much more experiential than any other learning environment I’ve ever been in.” He explained that learning about coaching was achieved by “living it.” In other words, all of the participants learned how to coach by practising coaching skills on fellow students and by experiencing themselves as coaching clients.

The participant with eclectic counselling training from the University of Alberta found that the coaching program was much more “focussed” and the expectations of the coaching students were more “clear” than what she had experienced as a counselling student. As she explained:

I felt a lot more focused in the coaching program. I felt much more clear on what the expectations were around how to do it...I could identify the skills, they were named...The three principles of co-active coaching were really clear and the ways to work with clients were clear...Having the skills done to me [during] the workshops and then practising them over and over. Back and forth, “here is the balance formula, go and use it”...so learning by doing really made a difference, whereas it was more observation in the counselling program...[Counselling] felt like a big hairball of stuff that I knew...I don’t remember anyone sitting down and saying “this is therapeutic and this isn’t”. They mostly said, “this was good, that wasn’t good, you passed.”

Not all of the participants, however, held the experiential training and instruction of the Coaches Training Institute in such high regard. The participant from the University of British Columbia experienced herself becoming more skeptical of the training program as time passed. She became “disappointed,” “frustrated,” and occasionally “disturbed” by a lack of “professional rigor,” “education and academic knowledge [of the facilitators],” “lack
of professional ethics,” and an “inadequate [practice and teaching of] client confidentiality.” In particular, she was disappointed in the school’s neglect to refer to “a research foundation” or discuss “a theoretical basis for what [was] doing” as a coach. As she explained in the following example:

I did not experience the facilitators to have the same level of educational or professionalism as the counselling group. That was a source of frustration for me because, I guess, I am the type of person who needs evidence that these people know what they are talking about. To give you an example of that, I remember listening to an audiotape on how to deal with fear in your clients. On the tape was this guy with an attitude of “look, I’ve got no background in psychology whatsoever, done no reading, know none of the research and here’s what you do if a client has fear...here is a three-step full safe program. Do this and it will automatically eradicate [your client’s] fear forever”...I was so disappointed because based on my counselling experience, this person had no idea what he was talking about and could do harm. The fact that he didn’t even recognize he could do harm was what upset me the most. It’s like the 14-year old in the paper this morning that stole a car and killed a person. They don’t realise how much harm they could do...so I found that very disturbing in the coaching program.

Furthermore, the counsellor from U.B.C. also noted “drastic” differences between the entry requirements, program format, and supervision of the coach training school and her graduate counselling training program. For example, anyone could attend the Coaches Training Institute as there were no pre-requisites or requirements for entry whereas acceptance into the graduate counselling program was determined by undergraduate marks, graduate record exam scores, course pre-requisites, references, and previous work experience.
Also, attendance in the counselling program involved two years of full time course work in comparison to five coaching courses, each conducted over three days for the core program. With respect to supervision, the UBC participant noted that during her counsellor training program, she received direct supervision for 16 months whereas she received only 9 hours of supervision by telephone during the six-month coach certification program.

Despite the difference in the amount and format of supervision, the majority of the participants experienced coach supervision as “making the difference between mediocrity and mastery” of their coaching skills. As one participant stated, “what I really valued in the supervisions was having someone listen to my coaching and gently explain to me, ‘Okay, this is what you said and here is how the skill should be delivered, here is another way to do it that may have more impact.’”

Another participant described coach supervision as being a “humbling” and “humiliating” experience. After listening to his first audiotape session with a coaching client, his supervisor said “that was a very nice therapy session, but it has nothing to do with coaching!” It was after this supervision session that the participant remembered feeling like he would have to “start from scratch” in order to learn how to become a coach. As this participant summarized, “the most useful thing is having someone watch and listen to your work and receiving comments. Direct supervision is the most powerful, true for both [counselling and coaching].”

All of the participants found that their coaching training programs encouraged them to work on their own personal development more so than their counselling programs. In fact, several participants felt that in the beginning, coach training was like attending “personal development workshops.” Of particular note, all of the participants were encouraged to hire their own personal coaches. Furthermore, in order to complete the certification portion of the coach training program, working with a coach was a requirement. Similarly, all of the
participants had experienced a greater calling to “live by example” as a coach than they had experienced as counsellors. As one participant explained, “it’s a motivating thing for me to lead by example or to live the kind of life that I really truly want for my clients...[As a coach, I strive to] live according to my values and I believe that people are naturally creative, resourceful and whole. That it is possible to have the life you want.” For another participant, “walking her talk” meant having to honor her own “extreme self care.” For example:

I was encouraged to schedule my coaching calls at the time when I’m the most vibrant coach. If the time doesn’t fit [the potential coaching client], then I will help that client to find someone else. I really honor [my own self-care] all the way. In a therapy world, there was a message of “take care of yourself, and by the way, could you also do this and this and this”...There was a huge lack of support for those helping and a huge lack of permission to need it...There was a sense that you were supposed to or ought to work with everyone. If a therapist is really good and adept, then that therapist will be all things to all people. [Coaching] has helped me to see that it’s actually more powerful to know who [I am] and what people [I can best help].

Similarly, one of the Adlerian participants found that he obtained “personal satisfaction from both [counselling and coaching], but more so in coaching because “it was more of what [he] wanted in [his] own life.” As he explained further, both schools encouraged the identification of core values, but coaching school went a step further and challenged him “to live his life aligned with those values.”

Finally, unlike in counselling school, one of the training focuses in coaching school was the development and marketing of one’s private practice. As the participants described, the participants were required to find their own paying clients to work with throughout the
coach training program. In comparison, all of the participants in counselling school
“volunteered” as practicum students at clinics or agencies where clientele were provided for
the students. Upon reflection, one participant stated “part of me would love to coach and be
part of an organization...Finding my own clients is the experience of coaching that I like
least...I would be happy from sunrise to sunset if I had more certainty.” On the other hand,
this participant also liked “the freedom of being self employed, there is no question that I
enjoy being able to do things when I want, to run off for training and do this and that...being
self employed has made the experience quite different.”

A second fundamental difference between coaching and counselling that emerged for
all participants was their experience of coaching and counselling as being two “distinctive
models” for creating change in the lives of people. Overall, the participants experienced
coaching as being “an industry” or “a practice” and counselling as being “a profession.” For
example, the University of British Columbia participant stated “I don’t experience coaching
as a profession. I experience it as an industry...I feel like I’m a counsellor professional and a
coaching practitioner.” Similarly, the John F. Kennedy participant experienced counselling
as “the application of theory put into practice” and coaching as “a practice...that cares about
what is important to you and what you’re going to do to get it...there’s no theory in that.”

Several participants used metaphors to illustrate how they experienced the distinction
between coaching and counselling:

It’s like looking above the horizon and then there’s the land you can see below
the horizon. To me, [coaching and counselling] are distinctive. They are both
on the landscape, they are both in view. But for me, counselling would be
more the land that we can see and [the accompanying problems], and the
coaching would be more of the sky above...looking at what the possibilities
are.
Another participant described his experience of therapy and coaching in the following metaphor:

Therapy is like water. I get to be water. I used to call it eight hours of meditation because I get to be this sort of receptive safe place...a receptive field. Sometimes I’m like a challenging intellect that can make connections for them or support them in making connections themselves. [Whereas] coaching is like fire. It takes energy. When a coaching client comes to me with their life, I’m going to be thinking about what can I do, what can I say, what powerful question could I ask that will rock their current small box so that they could see more potential for their life... I’m working harder as a coach. [I think the reason why] coaching requires much more energy for me probably has to do with [the fact that] all of the things I do as a therapist are bone deep in me... After twenty years of being a therapist, I am so unconsciously competent at doing therapy... But with coaching, I have to be a little more conscious.

One of the Adlerian counsellors experienced counselling as “an ice cream cone” and coaching as “all the ice cream you could eat.” As she explained:

There’s an ice cream store where you can order something called the Lalapolusa. It’s this huge thing of all the ice cream you could possibly want. You get a medal if you eat it. It’s kind of like therapy is the ice cream cone and coaching is the Lalapolusa. It makes your eyes get big. You’re thinking, wow, I didn’t realize there was so much!

Participants also experienced a difference in language and public opinion of the two models. For example, the coaching model “gave people permission to learn about themselves without having it be judged.” As this participant explained:
It’s kind of been if you needed to learn about yourself, there’s something wrong and you should have come in knowing this somehow...like expecting you to know algebra without ever studying it. Coaching is put into a language...a package...that makes development so much more accessible and attractive to people so that they will not feel judged by choosing it...It’s the successful person that seeks further development of their own mastery. It’s not the sick person or the defective person.

A third fundamental difference between coaching and counselling experienced by all participants was a difference in the philosophical stance taken by the two models. The philosophy explicitly taught in coaching school was that “people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole.” All five participants described this philosophy as being, to a greater or lesser degree, unique to coaching. For three of the participants, “the whole concept of people being naturally creative, resourceful, and whole...was a big shift.” As one explained:

I know for sure when I was doing the [counselling] work, I was not holding them naturally creative, resourceful, and whole in the same way I look at people now...and I know this to be true for when I have...coached people who have a mental illness...I now regard [people with mental illness] differently than I used to...It’s like really believing that they are going to find their way. Really believing that they have the resources. They might not be in a resourceful state right now, and they can be...I really believe that so much rests on how I hold them...my beliefs about them...In counselling, there was definitely a belief that these people are not well, these people are sick. That was one of the things I really didn’t like about working as a clinician in mental health at that time, and I think it is still true.
Similarly, the Adlerian participant who was the newest to the counselling profession experienced “an unwritten rule” in counselling that “people were broken...damaged...had wounds...[and therefore] needed to work through what they had experienced.” Likewise, the participant with the greatest number of years of counselling experience found that he had to “unlearn a habit of looking at what is wrong as a therapist” and begin to “look at what is right as a coach.” As he further explained:

Now certainly as a coach you’ll look at what’s wrong, and as a therapist you’ll look at what’s right, but the habit looks at different directions. When a therapeutic client comes through with a problem, I’m putting that within the context of all the other problems that the client has solved. When a coaching client comes through with a problem, I’m trying to figure out how to put them in a state of mind where they can imagine that problem solved and then have them teach themselves what the solution is. Both of those are very important enterprises, but they require a different set of tools.

For the other two participants, embracing the coaching philosophy did not require a huge perspective shift. Instead, the coaching philosophy became “a more natural fit than the counselling philosophy.” For example, one participant found a natural cross over between the Adlerian tenant to hold people as “creative” and the coaching philosophy that “people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole.” In her experience, however, the philosophy of the counselling profession at large was “above all else, do no harm.” Accordingly, she experienced therapeutic work as being cautious and tentative. At times, she also experienced therapy as “calling forth the patient rather than the person.” In contrast, she experienced the coaching philosophy to be “above all else, do not hold this person as small.” Accordingly, she found that she was called by the coaching industry to think “deeper, bigger, wider” and to have “more faith and trust in people’s ability to take care of themselves and handle their own
lives.” Furthermore, although the therapy field spoke to the importance of valuing the client’s own life vision, this participant found that in general, there was “too much attention on the therapist’s ability to provide the best assessment…to demonstrate the best counselling skills and not enough attention on the client as resourceful.”

Similarly, the University of British Columbia participant found that the coach training program enabled her to “entertain a different perspective on clients, [namely], that people are creative, resourceful, and whole.” As she explained, “I came into the counselling program believing that people were inherently resourceful. However, one source of confusion for me during the counselling training was when the counselling profession at large seemed to question the resourcefulness of people.” Occasionally, this participant experienced a clash between the counselling department’s espoused philosophy that “counselling is for helping people overcome everyday challenges” and a perspective at large that people who sought out counselling “needed fixing:”

I remember this one student who I was working with…an oriental young man who was shy. He had moved across cultures, so he wasn’t confident in this culture. He wanted to date and he didn’t know how to go about it in the Western culture. So that was the focus of our counselling sessions…how you go about approaching women that you are interested in going out with. To me…he was exhibiting health by seeking assistance in that way. He was seeking specific skills leading to acculturation. So I wouldn’t consider him to be unhealthy. However, the counselling perspective at large was that there was something wrong with him that needed to be fixed…That may have been just my overlay, but I would prefer to see him as a young man wanting to have success in other areas of his life beyond academic life and family. He wanted to experience success in an intimate relationship.
The UBC participant also personally experienced a double message in the counselling department when she sought out grief counselling for herself at the university after, as was previously mentioned, an international student committed suicide:

My response was to seek counselling for myself so that I could work through my own grieving process. [However], once I embarked on counselling for myself, that triggered a mechanism within the counselling psychology department where the department head and a few other people interviewed me for, I guess, my mental soundness to continue on with the program. I found that somewhat confusing because we're promoting counselling as an effective method to manage and overcome everyday challenges and death is one of those sorts of things that everyone encounters at one point or another. So to me, this was a proactive response to a situation that had occurred but the department questioned my request for counselling. It was like that if you made a supposition that if you’re going to seek counselling, you are unhealthy.

Fourth, all participants felt that the *counsellor-client relationship* was inherently *different from the coach-client relationship*. The difference was experienced in several ways. For example, all of the participants experienced coaching and counselling as being *two separate skill constellations on a continuum of client function*. As one participant stated, “the people I serve now [as a coach] all are what I would call fully functioning and the people I worked with as a counsellor / therapist were not always fully functioning.” Similarly, another participant explained:

I see psychiatry as being on the opposite end of the continuum to coaching.

So if you looked at client functioning as being the indicator of [where coaching begins and where counselling ends]...I think [one would move] through a need for psychiatric intervention, to assistance with counselling, to
hooking up with a coach as they increase in their function...Like Maslow’s concept of hierarchy of needs, once the physical basics such as food, water, and shelter are covered off...and once emotional and intellectual issues have been resolved...then the focus can be on moving forward and experiencing enhanced fulfillment in life...There is an expectation in coaching that clients do change their behaviours, so if the client isn’t making change in a behavioural way, then the coaching will stall. Whereas with counselling, you can kind of go on indefinitely in a process of exploration of past events and not necessarily create behavioural change...depending on what counselling model you are using.”

Another participant suggested that the appropriateness and effectiveness of coaching depended on the pre-existing skills that the client brought to the relationship. In her experience, for example, a good coaching candidate was someone who could “tolerate self observation and self awareness,” “imagine the future,” “generate a vision for their own life,” and who exhibited “an interest in using core values and personal dreams to guide one’s personal development.”

All of the participants experienced a difference in their role or purpose as a coach in comparison to their role or purpose as counsellor. For example, participants explained that their experience of counsellor was like being “a professional expert,” “a professional helper,” or “a healer.” On the other hand, the experience of coach was like being “a fellow traveller,” “a co-pilot,” “a professional deep mirror,” or “a magnifier of a client’s resourcefulness and unique gifts.” As one participant stated, “as a therapist, I wanted to help people find healing so they could reclaim their lives. As a coach, I want to help people recognize their magnificence so they can fully experience their lives...and realize how big their life purpose really is.” Another explained that his primary purpose as a counsellor was
“to generate hope and help people alleviate suffering from their lives.” In comparison, this participant described his coaching purpose in the following way:

A lot of my work as a coach is about being with whatever is in their lives...because I know that the more fully and enriched they can be with whatever is [present in their lives], the clearer their own resourcefulness will come to their own aid in terms of dealing with what needs to be dealt with. As a coach, I am fully there with the celebration of who they are [as human beings] and what they are creating in their life...As a coach, I say quite regularly “I don’t have the slightest idea what to do with your problem. What are you going to do?” I’m not actually interested in helping my coaching clients...because they don’t need any help. I’m not holding out any kind of hope like I would as a therapist because as a coach you are coaching hopeful people. Accordingly, all of the participants experienced a greater tendency to focus on the client’s past and present problems as counsellors, and a greater tendency to focus on the client’s present and future possibilities as coaches.

As one participant revealed:

For a therapist, what I’m curious about is the story of the client, and the past of the client, and the pattern of the past of the client. And I take that information to support that client in terms of writing the new present out of the old past. As a coach, I’m curious about the present of the client and the future of the client. And I use the future of the client to help the client write a new present. [When learning how to become a coach], I [had] to stop being interested in the past of the client [because it is] primarily irrelevant to coaching...I had to shift my curiosity from the past and present for a therapy client to the present and future for a coaching client.
Similarly, another client explained that he became “less interested in delving deeper into why a client [was the way the client was]... and began to look more outside the box and ask questions such as “well, where do you want to go from here?”

Another participant offered a case example of working with a client who witnessed the Sept 11th, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre:

She and I had been coaching for about 1 year before that happened and she asked if we could do counselling instead. So I was able to revert back to counselling for three months... The counselling was about the grieving process that this client was experiencing as a result of her witnessing the second plane hitting the tower. For her, it triggered some childhood losses [such as the death of her mother when she was little] and some unmet needs from childhood that were [creating problems] for her in her present life. For example, she was afraid to leave the house, and yet when she did leave the house, she was afraid to go home... So our counselling focused on the grieving process and the healing of those childhood wounds [that had been] exasperated from this critical incident... Then she decided that she wanted to move forward and go back to the coaching, so the focus became “given this profound experience, what is different for you moving forward? What do you want to bring to fruition now?”... When the client requested that we switch back to coaching, I became her co-pilot instead of her therapist, with the client in full command of the ship... [I experienced] a shift in perspective from my client as someone needing intervention to my client as someone who is healthy.

Inherent in the participants’ experience of their coaching and counselling roles, was a perceived difference in the locus of control within the coach-client relationship and the
counsellor-client relationship. For example, the participant from the University of Alberta reflected that when she was a counsellor in the 70's and 80's, there was a tendency to believe that counsellors were the experts. For example, "there was a belief that we were professionals and we knew best whereas co-active coaching is based on how we design the alliance...the coach and client are equal. So there is not a one-up / one-down which I recall very clearly from being a counsellor working with people." Echoing a similar experience, the participant who graduated from John F. Kennedy University in 1977 experienced the coaching relationship as being more equal than that of the therapist-client:

The psychotherapy relationship by its very nature is unequal. There is a client who is revealing...and the therapist who is taking the role of a person who knows how to get mentally healthy... [In comparison], the coach-client relationship is much more on the same level...a good coach will continually step out of a position of authority in order to empower the client, in fact, to the frustration of the client sometimes. As a coach, I continually take the stance that the solution to whatever is going on in the clients' life lies in the client because [I see] the client as being creative, resourceful, and whole enough to discover themselves. It is none of the coaches' damn business what they decide to do. And that's not true of a psychotherapist.

Participants with more recent counselling training (i.e., 1990's) also experienced themselves as having greater locus of control when engaged in a counsellor-client relationship than when engaged in a coach-client relationship. For example, the University of British Columbia participant summarized:

The helper's stance in counselling is someone is an expert that will bring forth different interventions to help the client over a hurdle whereas the coaching
perspective views the client and their role with the client differently. [In coaching], the client is [assumed to be] the person that has the best knowledge about themselves and has the answers within themselves or within reach. I think what appeals to me or what I see different [about coaching in comparison to counselling] is that the coaching model resources the client’s abilities more than counselling. Counselling tends to place the locus of control in the counsellor more than the client.

For several of the participants, overall the relationship with coaching clients felt “more natural” and “less stand-offish” than their relationship with counselling clients. As one participant summarized:

There is a standoffishness as a counsellor, as in “I’m the expert and you can’t really call me at home, and you can’t be a part of my life, and you can’t know about my family, and you can’t know anything about me but I get to know everything about you…” It’s very one-up, up to down [in the counselling relationship] and coaching is not that way at all. My clients know about me, or they know my wife. It’s a different scenario…the rules aren’t so rigid [in coaching]…it just feels more natural.

A final difference identified by the participants regarding the client relationship as a counsellor and as a coach was the mode of client contact. Participants noted that the frequency of client sessions conducted by telephone is far greater in coaching than in counselling. As one participant stated, “in coaching, the telephone is the main method of working with people, whereas in counselling, it would be an alternative method that would be based on lack of proximity.” With respect to the experience of working with clients over the telephone, one participant explained that she worked as a telephone employee assistance counsellor prior to enrolling in the coach training program. This position primed her for a
future in coaching because without the experience of counselling people over the phone, “I doubt whether I would have fully accepted the idea that coaching could be as effective over the phone as in person.” She found that the telephone employee assistance position and working with coaching clients over the phone taught her to “laser beam” her skills, to become “bold” and to “get to the point.”

A sixth theme that emerged from the research data was that the similarities experienced between coaching and counselling were to a certain extent, reflective of the participant’s theoretical orientation prior to becoming a coach and the participant’s focus when conducting a type of coaching called process coaching.

For example, the participant who graduated in 1991 from the Alfred Adler Graduate school of Psychology experienced the coaching model to be “hugely Adlerian” and “Adler on steroids.” As she explained, both coaching and Adlerian based counselling involved the exploration and identification of one’s core values and beliefs, one’s unique contribution or purpose in life, one’s preferred future, one’s lifestyle choices, and one’s map for life success. In her experience, both coaching and the Adlerian approach to counselling promoted the belief that people are “creative” and that “it’s not what we have that counts, but what we do with what we have that is important.” She explained that the main difference between Adlerian counselling and coaching was in amplitude. As she described, coaching “turns up the volume on Adlerian philosophy” and “keeps going where the field of therapy would stop.” In her experience, for example, counsellors would stop working with a client once the client was functional enough to return to work, when insurance stopped paying for therapy, or when the client decided it was time to stop. Coaches, on the other hand, would pick up the client at this functional place and help that client move towards personal excellence.

The Adlerian student who graduated in 1997 also recognized a similarity between the Adlerian philosophy and the coaching philosophy in so far as both emphasized a holistic
lifestyle approach to working with people. Furthermore, he also experienced a similarity between the future focus of solution-focused therapy and a principle of coaching called "forward the action."

The participant from John F. Kennedy suggested that if there were any similarities between coaching and counselling, the similarities would be found when examining a type of coaching taught at the Coaches Training Institute called "process coaching." As he explained, process coaching is about "exploring what the client is experiencing in the moment:"

I think [process coaching] is where counselling and coaching look most alike, and there is an inherent difference. The inherent difference is that when you’re doing therapeutic process, your focus is just on the moment. When you’re doing coaching process, you have a tremendous focus on the moment, but there is a little part of you sitting in the corner waiting for the bounce...and the bounce is an integral part of the coaching process where it isn’t an integral part of therapeutic process...It’s like if you go all the way down the tube, down to the bottom, and you ask your client a question. All of a sudden the [coaching] client will start to giggle because you’re working with healthy people. At some point healthy people giggle at their miseries. Or they’ll go “wait a minute, that’s not true.” Something shifts. There’s an energetic shift. Whereas in process therapy, you go down and down, and a bounce doesn’t come for a long time.

[After reading the above participant’s experience of process coaching, another participant expressed her own experience of process coaching in relation to counselling. For this participant, process coaching was similar to Gestalt therapy in that both use similar techniques to focus on the client’s immediate experience. In her experience, however, the]
fundamental difference between process coaching and counselling was in “how a client’s emotions are perceived.” As she explained:

Emotions are used as information in coaching whereas in therapy, I think emotions get judged… It really comes down to the perspective you stand in as a coach and as a therapist. As a coach, the perspective that I am holding is that my clients are creative, resourceful, and whole, and can handle their lives… When I do process coaching with someone and they cry, I don’t use the crying to make an judgement about the depth of my client’s grief or how problematic their experience is. I would get that information from the client. Whereas in therapy, I found that there was a tendency to use emotions as a cue to hold the client as small… to use emotions to pre-determine how debilitating a client’s experience was or the length of time it would take to deal with the experience, without necessarily asking the client.]

A seventh theme that emerged from the research data was participants found that their previous training and experience as counsellors was useful for their training and practice as coaches, but not necessarily a prerequisite. For example, several participants suggested that having a counselling background was “handy, but not a requirement” for becoming a good coach. At the same time, the majority of participants described their transition from counselling to coaching as being a “natural evolution.” As one stated:

Coaching was a natural progression of things for me… I probably needed one to have the other… I’m sure I needed my own healing process and maturity to reach a certain place where I wasn’t so darn sensitive about myself… I think having been a therapist, counselling supervisor, and an instructor of clinical assessment prepared me enormously for becoming a coach [as] I have a
pretty keen eye for figuring out who a good candidate for coaching is and who may not be.

Similarly, the participant with the least amount of counselling experience conceded that had it not been for the groundwork already established as a student and professional counsellor, he doubted whether he would have been capable of “jumping into the coaching” as the leap, personally and professionally, “would have been too large.” This participant also credited his student counselling experience as being the validating factor in his quest to work with people. When he decided to become a counsellor, “that was a turning point [in my] life.”

Several participants expressed having more confidence as a coach because of their previous counselling training and experience. For one participant, having a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology provided “credibility” and “a professional edge” over coaches without such a background. Others described being at an advantage because they already “knew how to establish rapport with people…and have a meaningful conversation.”

Eighth, participants identified five areas of concern regarding the practice of coaching and two points of caution for counsellors interested in practicing coaching. First, given that a large portion of counsellor training addressed ethics and client confidentiality, several of the participants suggested that their commitment to uphold client confidentiality in coaching relationships may be stronger than coaches without previous training in counselling. As one participant stated, “I found the coach program to be inadequate [in the practice and teaching of] client confidentiality.” Another suggested that they way she maintains client records “is much more counsellor / therapist like than most coaches [in that] I record client notes as if my files were to be examined in a court of law.”
Second, the John F. Kennedy participant suggested that the counselling profession was more organized than the coaching industry with respect to ongoing professional development and supervision of its members post training school:

If a counsellor has a really tough client or something you’ve never worked with before, you can hire an individual supervisor to supervise your work so you can learn how to manage this kind of client...but in coaching, once they get through the certification program, its like “phew, no one has to listen to me again.”

[After reading the above comments, one participant claimed that in her experience, coaches have many avenues available for ongoing professional development and supervision. For example, she explained that coaches can hire their own coach, assist at the Coaches Training Institute’s workshops, talk with their own supervisors during certification training, network with other coaching colleagues through existing professional organizations, and participate in ongoing professional training and development workshops that are readily available for coaches.]

Third, the same participant discussed a tendency of the coaching profession to promote a future oriented optimistic outlook on life at the risk of ignoring or denying legitimate human suffering:

In coach training, there is a bias towards optimism. Although process coaching gives the tools to be fully present to suffering, [I experienced] a bias towards balance and fulfillment coaching...There was definitely more leaning towards the hopeful future instead of the difficult present, and particularly the history of injustice...For example, as a supervisor of certified coaches, I see occasionally, this kind of arrogance that comes with working with mentally healthy people, where you decide that is what the world is about. You can get
a little bit to light and bright and cheery and tend to not see, you know, the sadness and suffering of the human condition. We get so oriented towards fulfillment and potential and stuff like that, it becomes, I must say, an American enterprise. “Let’s think positive, move forward!” We can lose clients there by not being able to be with fundamental truths like we’re all going to die, and that there is a great deal of suffering in the world, and that we live in this incredibly privileged society whereas most of the world’s resources are going to very small handful of white people. We forget about gender issues, we forget about transgender issues, we forget about ageism, sexism, racism, classism. The same trap that psychotherapy can fall into…we become so focussed on the individual that we lose the field, the context of this planet…The gift of psychotherapy is that therapists have the capacity to be with suffering. So that’s good actually, as it allows them to feel the pain of the planet. Whereas in coaching, I think the forward thrust of coaching supports denial and naiveté and optimism.

Fourth, the same participant suggested that because coaches are trained in the philosophy that “people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole”, coaches may assume that anyone is a good coaching candidate, “and so they [may] try to coach someone through their recovery.” He suggested that coaches should “refer that client to a therapist or get some more people on your team!”

Fifth, the same participant also expressed concern regarding a new type of coaching that has most recently emerged called relationship coaching. After listening to audiotaped excerpts of relationship coaching, this participant concluded that relationship coaching and therapy “overlap in a way that is dangerous to the coaching profession.”
I've listened to [audiotaped] excerpts of relationship coaching, and you could just pick it up and plunk it into a marriage-counselling course... I'll be damned if I can tell the difference between coaching relationships and doing marriage counselling... I think we're in danger of doing therapy without a license... and getting sued. Doing coaching with individuals [is not] a problem because when we are coaching individuals, we are definitely using different tools, we have different focuses, and we are working with different problems [than a therapist working with an individual client]. [However], working with a couple in marriage counselling is one of the hardest things in psychotherapy to do... The best way that I can help a couple is to help them see the dysfunctional patterns that they learned from their parents and have reproduced in their [current] relationship. Once they understand that picture, they can begin to change the way they interact and communicate with each other... This is totally inappropriate work for coaches... I suppose if a coach could purely stay in the present and the future and do work on designed alliance and values, you could squeak through. But when your couple is fighting in front of you... good luck!

[After reading the above comments, two participants expressed a differing view on relationship coaching. Unlike the participant above, both participants completed a relationship coaching training module and concluded that relationship coaching was inherently different from marriage counselling. Both explained that the difference was in how relationship coaching holds the relationship as being “creative, resourceful, and whole.” For these participants, marriage counselling was about identifying and working with existing dysfunction within a relationship whereas relationship coaching was about discovering “what impact the couple would like to have in the world.”]
In addition to the areas of concern raised regarding the practice of coaching, a couple points of caution were made for counsellors interested in becoming coaches. First, just as the John F. Kennedy participant cautioned against the assumption that anyone can be coached, he has also noticed "an arrogance amongst therapists that they can handle anything" too. With such a belief, he has experienced some therapists "getting into coaching without any prior coach training...and ineffectively applying an old therapeutic tool box to a new kind of client."

Second, another participant warned that as coaching has yet to establish a clear identity within the public’s eyes, she has found that she spends more time explaining what coaching is to people than she ever did when she was a counsellor. For example, “people tend to think they know what a counsellor does and they don’t tend to know what a coach does, so there is a lot explaining that I do not remember doing when I was counselling.” Consequently, she recommended that coaches be “really careful about how we present ourselves” and join “a coaches’ professional organization.”

The ninth to emerge from the data was that two American participants expressed strong opposition against future government regulation/licensing of coaches in the United States. For example, one participant suggested that “it would be a crying shame if the government [in the United States] took over the field of coaching to regulate it and placed it into the field of therapy. That would be giving one professional area the corner market on human development and change, and that would be a shame. It would be nice if we just trusted that people will figure out what would serve them best when they are given the information they need to evaluate their choices.” In her experience, the licensing of counselling professionals was useful in so far as defining standards of quality and ethics. Overall, however, she found that licensing did not accomplished what it set out to do, which was namely, to ensure client safety and quality therapeutic service. Instead, she experienced
the licensing of counsellors as an “illusion of safety” and financially discriminating for “a lot of people who would be incredible helpers, but [the licensing] makes it unaffordable to become one.”

The John F. Kennedy participant contended that from his experience, the movement towards professionalism in the field of therapy was “castrating:”

I believe the whole insurance racket destroyed therapy. It really castrated therapists. They became more and more professional. All of a sudden people are judging therapy, and [consequently], therapy had to become much more perfect, more scrupulous about our relationships with clients, more careful with our boundaries, avoid exposing too much [of ourselves] because that’s unprofessional. Soon therapists became more like cold fish robots in order to fit into the profession. In turn, this participant expressed a hope that “coaching will always be a profession of renegades…without insurance and licensing….This would mean that there will be a lot of crappy coaches out there [but] coaching would be an arena of maximum creativity and possibility.” It is important to note that the subject of government regulation and licensing did not come up in discussion with the other three participants.

The tenth and final theme common to all participants was that they experienced both counselling and coaching as “powerful”, “valuable”, and “personally fulfilling” models for creating positive change in the lives of people. Even the University of British Columbia participant, who expressed strong reservations regarding the lack of academic rigor and professionalism in the coach training program, found “value” and “huge efficacy” of the coaching model itself. In conclusion, all of the participants experienced coaching and counselling as being “equally important” and “useful practices” along a continuum of mental health and personal development. As one participant summarized, “I have felt honored to
have been given a chance to be in a relationship with someone for their own betterment, in both counselling and coaching.”
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

In order to explore how personal counselling and personal life coaching are similar to and different from each other, five individuals with a Masters degree in counselling psychology and a certificate in coaching were asked to describe how they experienced their training and professional roles. In this chapter, the findings derived from the interviews conducted for this study will be compared to the existing counselling and coaching literature. This will be followed by the limitations of the study. Finally, a discussion of the implications for both counsellor and coach training and practice will be presented followed by recommendations for future research.

Comparison of Findings to Literature

With respect to the student counsellor experience, the participants in this study experienced a range of emotions while training to become counsellors, just as the participants in Truell's (2001) study had reported. Although the majority of participants in this study shared positive emotional experiences, in comparison to Truell's (2001) inquiry into the negative aspects of learning counselling, several participants expressed feeling scared and confused during their counselling training program. Although the participants in this study did not discuss how their counsellor training programs affected their relationships outside of school, as was investigated in Truell's (2001) study, all of the participants emphasized the importance of establishing friendships with school colleagues and having the opportunity for supervision during their counsellor training. In this study, the quality of the relationship between the student counsellors and their instructors / supervisors ranged from disappointing to exceptional. It is interesting to note that for the participants who described having a positive connection with instructors and supervisors, the same participants described their overall experience as student counsellors in a more positive light. This finding seems to lend
support to Truell’s (2001) recommendation that instructors / supervisors help student counsellors to not only in acquire counselling skills but also support students throughout the personally challenging process of becoming a counsellor.

As was reported in Truell’s (2001) study, the participants in this study also experienced being personally impacted by clients. For example, participants in this study noted that when they began to work with clients, their own lives began to shift and “certain things started to fall apart… the changes that [we] needed started coming to the surface.” As was found in Truell’s (2001) study, it appears that the participants who felt responsible for “fixing” their clients were more likely to experience greater emotional distress as student counsellors than the participants who experienced the locus of control as being more equal between themselves and their clients.

As professional counsellors, the participants in this study, for the most part, continued to work with the same type of client and employed the same theoretical orientation that they had experienced as student counsellors. For example, the four participants who worked primarily with mentally ill clients continued to work with mentally ill clients as professional counsellors. The participant who worked primarily with people in transition as a student counsellor, continued to work with student and career professionals after graduating from the counsellor training program. The two participants who enrolled in the Alfred Adler Graduate School of Psychology maintained an Adlerian approach as professional counsellors. The remaining three eclectic student counsellors continued to draw eclectically from counselling theory as professional counsellors. As was discussed in this study’s literature review, polls of counselling school graduates have been conducted. Although the polls identified in this study did not explore whether or not the client population and theoretical orientation remained the same upon graduating from counselling school, the polls did suggest a trend in counsellor work that seems to match this study. For example, in Smith and Drodge’s (2001) survey of
recent graduates from the University of Ottawa’s M.Ed. program in Educational Counselling, the researchers found that three-quarters of the counsellors sampled were working in settings other than schools. The majority of counsellors were employed in community agencies, followed by private practice and corporate consulting. Similarly, four of the participants in this study were employed as professional counsellors in community mental health agencies, one of whom also operated a private counselling practice. A fifth participant worked at a University College and at a corporate consulting firm.

All of the participants in this study found the differences between counselling and coaching to be more apparent than the similarities. Presently, there are no other studies that have explored the coach training experience, let alone compared the training experience of coaches to that of counsellors. Therefore, any comparisons made here are based on this researcher’s own attempts to draw inferences. For example, it was clear from this research that the training to become a counsellor was indeed different that the training to become a coach. As was described by the participants, coach training was almost completely experiential without any reference to research or theory whereas counsellor training employed a combination of theoretical, research, and experientially-based instruction. The entry requirements were far more exclusive in counselling than in coach training programs. The amount of course work and supervised practicum experiences required to become a credentialled counsellor was far greater than the training requirements for a coach. These finding may be representative of the difference between the historically well-established counselling profession and its numerous professional structures such as accreditation training program bodies, and the relatively new coaching profession with its sparse and controversial accreditation system.

It is interesting to note that four of the five participants in this study experienced coach training to be a more enjoyable and a more powerful learning experience than their
counsellor training experience. One participant, however, was disturbed by the coach training program’s lack of academic rigor and neglect to refer to theory or research. Despite the apparent contrast of opinions, all of the participants appreciated the encouragement that they had received as coaching students to work on their own personal development. When Truell (2001) asked the recent counselling graduates in his study what would have been helpful during their counsellor training programs, the participants explained that they would have liked their instructors / supervisors to have spent more time on the personal challenges that the participants faced when learning to become counsellors. Similarly, one may suggest that the participants in this study enjoyed greater personal support when learning to become coaches than when they were learning to become counsellors. For example, all of the participants were encouraged to work with their own coach. In comparison, one participant was temporarily questioned as to why she wanted to seek out counselling for herself while she was training to become a counsellor. Furthermore, all of the participants felt that they were called to “walk their talk” as student and professional coaches more so than when they were student and professional counsellors. It appears that at least from the coaching client perspective (Dhaliwal, 2001), walking the talk is indeed an important aspect that clients look for in coaches.

Participants also stated that they had received instruction on how to develop and market a private practice in coaching school but had not received such training while in counselling school. When reviewing the CACREP training requirements of counselling schools (Brown & Srebalus, 2003), the polls mentioned in this study’s literature review (Heibert, Simpson, & Uhlemann, 1992; Smith & Drodge, 2001), and the results of this research, it appears that the business side to counselling is a subject that remains outside of the graduate counsellor training experience.
Participants of this study also experienced coaching and counselling as being two distinctive models for creating change in the lives of people. For example, participants experienced coaching as being “an industry” or “a practice” and counselling as being “a profession.” Again, as there is currently no other research comparing personal coaching to personal counselling, comparisons made here are the researcher’s own inferences. For example, it was interesting to discover that nowhere in the counselling literature reviewed for this study was counselling ever referred to as an “industry.” Instead, counselling was always referred to as a “profession.” In comparison, the terms “profession” and “industry” were interchangeably used throughout the coaching literature. This finding may be reflective of the difference in the number of years that counselling has been established in comparison to coaching, and in the different originating focuses of counselling and coaching; individual / family adjustment within society versus corporate productivity. A final aspect that was mentioned by one participant about how she saw coaching and counselling as being two distinctive models is worth revisiting. For this participant, the language used to market coaching and the subsequent public opinion of coaching was in her experience, more favourable towards coaches than counsellors. Similarly, participants in Truell’s (2001) study reported experiencing some negative reactions from the public when the participants told members of the public that they were learning to become counsellors.

Participants in this study also experienced a difference in the philosophical stance taken by the two models. Specifically, all five participants felt that the coaching philosophy, which explicit states that “people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole,” was to a greater or lesser degree unique to coaching. As counsellors, all of the participants experienced either themselves or the counselling profession at large as having a tendency to doubt or question the natural creativity, resourcefulness, and/or wholeness of their clients. This finding may be in part reflective of the fact that four of the participants worked with
counselling clients that had “severe and persistent mental illness.” However, even the participant who worked with clients who had “everyday pedestrian struggles” experienced a message as a counselling student that people who sought out counselling needing fixing. The degree to which the participants found the coaching philosophy to be unique to coaching was reflective of their counselling theoretical orientations prior to becoming a coach. For example, two participants experienced similarities between the coaching philosophy and the Adlerian approach to working with people. One participant found that solution-focused therapy was similar to coaching in that both were future focused. Although Hudson (1999) suggested that coaching is informed by psychology and counselling theory, currently there is no other research that has examined the coaching philosophy or compared it to counselling theory.

Participants in this study also experienced a difference between the counsellor-client relationship and the coach-client relationship. All of the participants saw coaching and counselling as being two separate skill constellations on a continuum of client function. Accordingly, the participants described the ideal coaching client as having pre-existing skills such as being able to “tolerate self observation and self awareness,” “imagine the future,” “generate a vision for their own life,” “demonstrate hopefulness,” and have “an interest in using core values and personal dreams to guide one’s personal development.” In the participants’ experience, counselling clients were not always capable of bring such characteristics to the counselling relationship. When examining the reasons why participants in Dhaliwal’s (2001) research worked with a coach, it appears that all of the participants were interested in improving their work performance and already possessed the skills identified above prior to hiring their coaches. It is important to note, however, that no research has been conducted to validate how coaching works, who it best serves, or how it compares to specific counselling approaches.
Within the counselling relationship, the participants experienced a difference in their role or purpose as coaches in comparison to their role or purpose as counsellors. For example, the participants described the professional role of counsellor as being like a "professional expert," a "professional helper," and a "healer" and the professional role of coach as being like a "fellow traveller," a "co-pilot," "a professional deep mirror," and a "magnifier of a client's resourcefulness and unique gifts." These results seem to support the coach characteristics identified by client participants in Dhaliwal's (2001) study. For example, participants in Dhaliwal's study felt that their coaches were "on the same level" as themselves within the coach-client relationship. Similarly, the participant's in this study experienced more equality within the coach-client relationship than within the counsellor-client relationship. For the majority of participants in this study, the counselling relationship had a "one-up / one-down" feel to it, with a greater sense of expertise being accorded to themselves as counsellors than to their clients. Accordingly, all of the participants in this study experienced themselves as being more "natural" and "less stand-offish" with coaching clients than with counselling clients. This finding may be reflective of the difference between the ethical guidelines and standards established for counsellors in comparison to coaches.

The findings of this study also seems to suggest that counsellors, in general, tend to focus more on the client's past and present problems and coaches, in general, tend to focus more on the client's present and future possibilities. Although the participants conceded that they will look at a client's past, present, and future as both counsellors and as coaches, the noted difference was in the tendency to which a client's past and present was explored in comparison to the client's present and future. These findings seem to support Dhaliwal's (2001) research in which the participants described their work with coaches as being present and future focussed. However, as there is no research that has deconstructed the coaching
model and compared it to counselling theoretical orientations, one is unable to determine the extent to which the focus as described above is exclusive to coaching or how it may be similar to present and future oriented counselling approaches such as cognitive behavioural or solution focussed counselling.

Participants in this study also noted that the use of the telephone was the main method of working with people, whereas in counselling, it was an alternative method that was based on lack of proximity. Again, no research has been conducted on the efficacy of telephone coaching or how it compares to the use of the telephone in counselling.

A few of the participants suggested that if there was any overlap between counselling and coaching, it would be found when comparing a type of coaching called process coaching to counselling. As explained by the participants, process coaching involves exploring what the client is experiencing in the moment. For one participant, process coaching was similar to Gestalt therapy in that both use similar techniques to focus on the client’s immediate experience. One participant explained that in her experience, only the Coaches Training Institute taught process coaching. Currently, no other studies have been conducted on process coaching.

The findings of this research seem to imply that previous training and experience as counsellors is useful for the training and practice as coaches, but is not necessarily a prerequisite. As the majority of the participants in this study expressed, becoming a coach was a natural evolution from their counselling roots. Several stated that they felt more confident, sensed greater credibility, and experienced having a professional edge over coaching colleagues without a counselling background. The therapists turned coaches in Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic’s (2001) study suggested that due to their clinical training in counselling and psychological assessment, they felt more skilled at identifying signs of client dysfunction than coaches without clinical training. Likewise, Berglas (2002) argued that
coaches without clinical training are at risk of ignoring or overlooking signs of client
dysfunction. Similarly, a few of the participants in this study also expressed concern over
whether coaches without clinical training would inappropriately assume that anyone was a
good coaching candidate given that the coaching philosophy taught in school espouses that
people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. Berglas (2002) also argued that client
confidentiality was inadequately taught and supervision during coach training was sparse.
Likewise, one participant in this study was concerned that the coach training did not
adequately protect client confidentiality nor did it provide enough supervised training
experiences. It is important to note, however, that the remaining four participants found the
supervision in their coach training programs to be excellent and the instruction around client
confidentiality to be adequate.

The findings of this research also indicate that coaching is now branching into areas
formerly dominated by counsellors, such as relationship coaching. Although one participant
was concerned that relationship coaching was “like doing marriage counselling without a
licence,” two other participants who had trained in the relationship coaching model found
relationship coaching to be different from marriage counselling. In their experience,
marrige counselling was for dysfunctional couples looking to heal their relationships
whereas relationship coaching was for functional couples looking for ways to impact the
world as partners. Currently, there is no other research that has explored relationship
coaching nor compared it to marriage counselling.

It appears from this research that being a counsellor does not automatically make one
a good coach. Like the therapists turned coaches in Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic’s (2001)
study, the participants in this research also recommended that counsellors interested in
becoming coaches enrol in a coach training program. It also appears that the public
perception of what counsellors do is more apparent than the public perception of what
coaches do. For example, in this study, one participant found that amount of explaining she had to do regarding what coaching is and what a coach does was far greater than the amount of explaining she had to do when she was a counsellor. Whether or not the public perception of what a counsellor does is accurate was not explored in this study.

In this research, two of the American participants were strongly opposed against future government regulation / licensing of coaches in the United States. For these participants, licensing of counsellors had been useful in so far as defining standards of quality and ethics. They found, however, that licensing had created an illusion of safety in the counselling profession. One participant was concerned that licensing had become financially discriminating for some would be counsellors. Another found that licensing "castrated" the counselling practice. It is important to note that the licensing of coaches was not brought up as a topic of discussion during interviews with the other three participants. No other research examining the licensing of coaches has been found.

Finally, it appears from this research that both counselling and coaching are "powerful," "valuable," and "personally fulfilling" models for creating positive change in the lives of people. All of the participants in this study found value and efficacy in both models. In summary, the participants concluded that counselling and coaching were equally important and useful practices along a continuum of mental health and personal development. Currently, no other research is known that has drawn such conclusions.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. One is related to the size of the study's participants group. It can be argued that a group of five participants does not provide a fair representation of the counsellor / coach population. Due to this limitation, the findings of this study have been described as 'indications' only. In keeping with the phenomenological research approach (Osborne, 1990), however, the participant group was deliberately kept
small in order to obtain in-depth data and focus on the quality of information as opposed to
the quantity.

The study was also limited by the snowball sampling method of participant
recruitment. Given that the recruitment of participants was established though participant
referral, one may argue that the sample was biased given that participant referral was made
within one’s own network of colleagues. Consequently, the ability to generalize the findings
of this study to the coach–counsellor experience is limited.

Another limitation of the study was that the members of the participant group all came
from one coaching school. It may have been better to research the experiences of graduates
from a number of different coaching schools, just as the participants in this study represented
different counselling schools. Originally, one of the criteria set for this research was for
individuals to have graduated from either The Coaches Training Institute or The Institute for
Life Coach Training. In the end, however, only graduates from The Coaches Training
Institute expressed interest in the study.

This study was also limited in that the majority of participants compared their
experience of counselling mentally ill clients to their experience of coaching mentally healthy
clients. A study that encompassed to a greater degree the experience of counselling mentally
healthy clients in comparison to coaching mentally healthy clients may have yielded different
results. Similarly, as the years of counselling experience ranged from 5 to 25 years post
graduate school, a study that had compared participants with more recent exposure to current
counselling training programs may have yielded different results when comparing such
training to coach training programs.

Finally, as the participants who volunteered for this study were either former
counsellors turned full-time coaches or were practising counselling and coaching part time,
one may argue that the results may have been different, or perhaps less positively biased
towards coaching, if the study had included participants who were coaches turned counsellors.

Implications for Counsellor Training and Practice

It would seem from the participants’ comments and from the literature review, that a key to ensuring a positive student counsellor training experience is to have instructors and supervisors that are not only good at teaching counselling skills but are also helpful at supporting students’ personal development. For example, the findings of this study seem to indicate that coach training encourages students to seek out help and to prioritize their own well being more so than graduate counsellor training programs. Perhaps counselling programs may want to incorporate a training component on the process of becoming a counsellor and provide more explicit encouragement for student counsellors to take advantage of the help available from established counsellors.

The findings also seem to suggest that the inclusion of a business training component for counsellors may be prudent. For example, given that the Smith and Drodge (2001) poll found that the number of Canadian counsellors who now work in private practice is equal to the number of counsellors in school and community settings, one may suggest that information regarding how to establish a private practice and the associated ethical considerations would be well received by student counsellors. It appears from this study that counsellors interested in becoming coaches would be, in particular, well advised to develop entrepreneurial skills given that most of coaching is practised as a private business.

The findings of this study also seem to suggest that counsellor training and the counselling profession at large may still be struggling to separate itself from traditional medical model approaches of psychotherapy given that all of the participants in this study, to a greater or lesser degree, experienced conflicting messages regarding the health of people who seek out counselling. It is interesting to refer back to Hiebert and Uhlemann’s (1993)
study where counsellors defined themselves as working with normal (in comparison to pathological) clients, who live in community (rather than institution) settings, and who experience any number of developmental life issues or personal life crises. In actuality, however, the areas of practice identified by the counsellors did not match their definition. For example, the respondents indicated that the majority of their caseloads were remedial or rehabilitative in nature, rather than developmental or preventative. Consequently, Hiebert and Uhlemann (1993) warned that such a trend may leave a door open for others to take over the counsellor’s traditional role of education and prevention, such as vocational and career counselling. The results of this study seem to indicate that coaches have already stepped through such doors and have begun to knock on new ones, such relationship coaching.

This study also indicates that counsellors, if they so desire, are well-positioned to enter into and provide leadership for the coaching industry given their clinical training in assessment, their expertise at establishing rapport and creating meaningful dialogue with clients, and their professional commitment to uphold ethical conduct such as client confidentiality. It also appears that the ease to which one crosses over from counsellor to coach is in part dependent on the counsellor’s theoretical orientation prior to becoming a coach. For example, the participants in this study who utilized a more psychodynamic or medical model approach in counselling found the transition to coaching to be far more distinctive than the participants who held a more cognitive behavioural or solution focussed approach to counselling.

Finally, as counselling and coaching were both found to be “powerful,” “valuable,” and “personally fulfilling” models for creating positive change in the lives of people, the results of this study may serve to validate the contribution that counsellors already make in the world and may also offer a new career option for counsellors to consider.
Implications for Coach Training and Practice

It appears from this research that there are mixed reviews regarding the training of coaches. Although four of the five participants were strongly in favour of their coach training, one participant felt that her coach training program lacked academic rigor, neglected to reference theory and research, did not provide enough supervised training experiences, and inadequately discussed ethical issues such as client confidentiality. Given the mixed opinions regarding coach training, the newness of the coaching industry and its accreditation systems, and the lack of research on the efficacy of the coaching model, one may suggest that the onus of ensuring adequate coach training or obtaining good quality service currently rests on the individual. Indeed, two of the participants in this study were hopeful that the coaching industry would remain free of legislation and licensing in order to keep the responsibility of client care in the hands of the client.

Some of the participants expressed mild to moderate concern that coaches without clinical training in assessment may not be able to recognize signs of client dysfunction or appreciate the importance of referring such clients to professionals such as counsellors. These findings seem to suggest that coach training programs may want to discuss at a greater extent the scope of practice for coaches and when to refer clients to professionals such as counsellors. Some of the participants suggested that coaches would be wise to join existing professional coaching associations and to continually engage in supervision after coaching training was complete. Coaching associations and training programs may want to consider such suggestions when planning for future educational and professional development requirements for coach certification.

Although all of the participants in this study experienced fundamental differences between coaching and counselling, the results of this study also suggested that depending on one’s theoretical orientation, an overlap exists between the two models. Given this overlap, it
appears that the coaching industry will continue to be faced with the challenge of establishing a clear professional identity separate from counselling.

Finally, given that the coaching industry is not regulated, the ethical guidelines for coaches are general and in the early stages of developmental, coach training does not appear to include an in-depth discussion regarding scope of practice or provide a significant amount of supervision, the results of this study suggest that it would behove the individual coach to seek out additional sources of training and/or network with other professionals such as counsellors in order to ensure safe delivery of service and prudent client care.

Recommendations for Future Research

As this study was the first of it’s kind to compare personal coaching to personal counselling from the perspective of individuals who have both coach and counsellor training, the directions for future study are numerous. For example, now that themes on the topic of personal coaching in comparison to personal counselling have been identified, each theme could be qualitatively explored in greater depth or further tested using quantitative methods.

With respect to the limitations of this study, it would be interesting to compare the findings of this study to new research that recruited participants who were from coaching schools other than The Coaches Training Institute, who had more recent exposure to counselling school, or who experienced the majority of their counselling clientele as being mentally healthy. It would also be interesting to explore how the experience of coaches turned counsellors compares with the experience of counsellors turned coaches, as was investigated in this study.

With respect to the implications for counsellor training and practice, it appears that research exploring the current professional identity of counsellors would be helpful in order to further clarify the role that counsellors play, the clients that they best serve, and the training required in order to meet the current market place demand for counsellors. For
example, it would be interesting to know if incorporating a personal development and 
business training component in graduate counsellor training programs would be efficacious 
for future counsellors. As was identified in this study, participants experienced a conflict 
between the philosophy that people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole and an 
overlaying message as student and professional counsellors that people who sought out 
counselling needed “fixing.” In order to understand more fully the experienced conflict, it 
seems prudent that further research be conducted in order to clarify how the differences 
between the counselling model and the traditional medical model are being taught in graduate 
school and subsequently, how these differences are reflected in practice.

With respect to the implications for coach training and practice, the results of this 
study seem to suggest that the overall lack of research conducted in the coaching industry is a 
hindrance towards obtaining professional distinction. Consequently, it would seem important 
for the coaching industry to explore and identify how the psychological theories and practices 
of the counselling profession inform coaching. Perhaps such research would ground the 
practice and help turn the coaching industry into a coaching profession. Specific areas for 
future research could include examining the efficacy of the coaching model, comparing 
cognitive behavioral or solution focussed counselling to coaching, identifying boundaries of 
the coaching scope of practice, or conversely, exploring how coaching could be incorporated 
into mental health arenas that have traditionally been guided by a medical model.
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APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Thank-you for agreeing to participate in my research study. Please take a few minutes to fill out the questions below. As a reminder, all information will remain confidential and the results of the research will refer to you anonymously.

Contact Information:
1. Name:_________________________ Age:_______ Gender:________
Preferred Code Name:_________________________
Best day / time to reach me:_________________________
Email address:_________________________
Preferred telephone contact number(s):_________________________

Counselling Education:
Please indicate level and name of counselling degree:

_______________________________________________

Please indicate the school from which you received your counselling degree:

_______________________________________________

Coaching Education:
Please describe your formal coaching education / training:

_______________________________________________

Please indicate the school(s) from which you received your coach training:

_______________________________________________

Work Experience:
How many months / years post masters degree completion have you worked with counselling clients?_____

How many months / years post coach training completion have you worked with coaching clients?_____

Current Work Profile:
What percentage does coaching comprise your current work load:_____

What percentage does counselling comprise your current work load:_____

Please indicate your present occupation title(s):__________________________________________
APPENDIX D

GENERAL ORIENTING STATEMENT

The following statement will be read to all participants at the beginning of the first interview:

The purpose of this study is to learn about your experience as a student and professional counsellor in comparison to your experience as a student and professional coach. As there is little research that has examined the similarities and differences between coaching and counselling, much can be learned from your experience.

To get started, you may want to talk about your experience training as a student coach and your experience training as a student counsellor. Then you may want to describe your experience being a professional coach and your experience being a professional counsellor. Or, you may want to reflect on a specific event or situation that we could explore in greater detail. In any case, I invite you to spend as much time as you would like in order to share what was most important to you during your experience as a coach and as a counsellor.

Occasionally, I may ask you for more information or I may clarify something that you’ve said so that I fully understand your experience.

Do you understand what I am hoping to learn about your experience?
Do you have any questions before we begin?
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

During the interview, I will use reflection in response to participants' descriptions of their experiences and when necessary, ask for clarification. I will ask the following open-ended questions if participants seem to have more to say but have become stuck. These questions may be used in order to help facilitate the participants' exploration of their own experience.

1. Can you tell me more about what you were thinking or feeling at that time?
2. What was that like for you?
3. What was important to you about that?
4. What did that mean for you?
5. What similarities between being a coach and being a counsellor did / do you experience?
6. What differences between being a coach and being a counsellor did / do you experience?
7. If you had to use one word to describe your experience of being a coach, what would it be?
8. If you had to use one word to describe your experience of being a counsellor, what would it be?
9. Let me check this out with you. You're saying .......... Is that right?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience of being a coach and of being a counsellor?
APPENDIX F

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

A follow-up telephone interview will be conducted with each participant. The purpose of follow-up interview will be to validate the preliminary research findings by inviting participants to review and express their opinions regarding the themes that have emerged from the data analysis. Participants will be asked the following questions and their responses will be documented during the interview:

- How do these themes compare with your individual experience?
- Is there anything that you would like to share regarding how you feel or what you think about these themes?
APPENDIX G

EMPATHETIC GENERALIZABILITY

Description of the task for theme reader:

After reading these common and unique themes, please tell me how the themes compare with your personal experience of being a student and professional coach and your personal experience of being a student and professional counsellor?
APPENDIX I

RECRUITMENT INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Dear Coaches / Counsellors,

A Counselling Psychology graduate student from the University of British Columbia is conducting a research study to learn about the experience as a student and professional counsellor in comparison to the experience as a student and professional coach.

The graduate student would like to conduct a telephone interview with individuals who meet the following criteria:

1. Completion of a masters degree (or PhD) in counselling.
2. Completion of either all five training courses from The Coaches Training Institute (Co-Active Coaching, Fulfillment, Balance, Process, In The Bones) or the 30-hour Basic Intensive course taught through The Institute for Life Coach Training.
3. A minimum of one year of experience working with counselling clients post masters degree completion.
4. A minimum of one year experience working with personal coaching clients post coach training completion.
5. Must have a computer and email.

If you would be interested in participating in this study, please read the attached Letter of Intent for more information and for researcher contact details.

Sincerely yours,

Heather McCullough