



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR PROFESSIONAL HELPERS

A Residential Workshop Innovation

Godfrey T. Barrett-Lennard



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Preface

This book springs from, brings into detailed view and reaches beyond an innovation that took place half a century ago, though it remains fresh in the human processes involved and up to date in this telling. Venturesome participants from across Australia converged for a novel developmental experience in the then rather isolated small city of Armidale in the New England region of New South Wales. They were drawn to an unfamiliar learning experiment on a new-forming path that their resulting experience helped to illuminate and define. We called the project they were drawn to a “workshop in therapeutic counselling.” Nearly all who came to it were already working in personal and social helping fields (and based in mental health disciplines) but keen to extend their capacities and personal reach in their work. The people conducting the workshop were exponents of new thinking and practice in counselling and psychotherapy. The workshops would run for nearly two weeks in a university residential setting (almost everyone came from somewhere else) so that the interest and motivation were strong and the workshops were exceptionally eventful experiences to virtually everyone who took part.

What motivates me now to revisit and search deeply into the process, effects and meaning of this landmark episode in my professional life and the lives of colleagues who participated and carried effects into their work and relationships with so many others? This question contains part of the answer, that is, that the episode and its consequences strongly

stand out in my earlier work and life. Moreover, my files still bulge with precious records and data from that singular experience, so that close documentation is no problem. The fresh tracking here of what happened, how it unfolded and with what short- and long-term effects and wider implications is a search that extends far beyond earlier scattered, partial and relatively inaccessible accounts. It has relevance for the extensive current work with small groups whose *raison d'être* in varied contexts is to serve developmental needs and aspirations of the participants themselves. Perhaps most important, I believe that this story has unique potential value for students and trainees learning about intensive groups and how to be an effective facilitator and acute thinker in this complex sphere. It also could find its way to thoughtful experiential and therapy group “consumers” as well as a range of interested practitioners and teachers.

When the workshops began, I was relatively fresh from my doctoral studies and training in Chicago, with Carl Rogers and others, and had about four years of post-Ph.D. teaching and therapy experience that included demonstrations in groups of summer school participants (mainly teachers, while still in the United States) and one stand-alone multisession group. The then young University of New England (UNE) in Armidale that I had come to was building its reputation in a conservative academic climate that encouraged established content in its degree programmes – nearly all undergraduate. I needed to search beyond my regular teaching for expression of the most distinctive resources and interests I came with. There was some interest in Australia in Rogers’s new thought and practice, although no one here besides myself had gone through focused training and first-hand experience with him. Other newer therapies mostly had not yet surfaced or were barely beginning, and behavioural and cognitive approaches still lay in the future. A special feature and resource at UNE was its energetic and strongly developing adult education/extensions department. This also was a crucial factor in helping to make it possible in practice for the events in the early chapters of this book to take place.

When it first became clear that there was considerable interest “out there” in coming to where I was located for a mooted full-time two-week workshop, it became possible for me to call on the other best-qualified person in Australia to collaborate with me in this initiative. This colleague,

Prof. Pat Pentony at the Australian National University, also was known to a good many of the prospective workshop members. The fact that we would be working intensively in smallish groups grew in part from Rogers' strongly facilitating person-centred style in his leadership of the University of Chicago Counselling Centre and from the early interest in group therapy (Hobbs, 1951) and group-centred leadership (Gordon, 1951) by some of his colleagues. The residential Armidale workshops broke new ground in their process nature and effects as a concentrated experiential learning group experience, for all of us involved.

The chapters in Part 1 of this book closely describe and illustrate the workshop process, especially from transcriptions of many group sessions, and account of how this experience was perceived and judged by members at the time. The transcribed "voices" of members in the intensive small groups, and their rating appraisals of a spectrum of qualities at the end of each session, are the compelling main avenues in this first Part. Part 2 of the volume focuses on member experience, observation and activity following the workshops. It begins with a collation of communicative feedback letter reports from members, now back home in their work and personal life situations. Separately, follow-up questionnaire data gathered more formally after six to eight months was closely studied and is reported in Chapter 7. Other chapters in this second part are based on very long-term follow-up inquiry. They search into rich information from life events data from ex-workshop members and from interviews with a cross-section of these members, all of this gathered some ten years after their workshop experience.

The further Part 3 of the book advances an encompassing systematic view and theory of experiential groups, as a main feature. A great part of human life takes place in and through a wide diversity of small groups, most of which are vital member parts of varied bigger systems. My search moves on to a close outline of the continued Armidale workshop story and some of its ripple effects and emergent later manifestations of which I have direct knowledge. The broader contemporary professional and social importance of low-structure participant-centred learning and discovery groups is a further topic.

Finally, there are two appendices, the first describing an exploratory study calling on the viewpoints of outside observers in significant

ongoing relationships with workshop members. The author's Relationship Inventory was variously used to tap estimations before and after the workshops. The second appendix is inventively designed to assist students, and interested others, in their active discovery learning and idea development, from engagement with individual chapters of the book.

Altogether, this volume follows a career-long interest and finally does sufficient justice to the courageous "voyages" of member-participants who in effect were contributing architects to the original workshops (there were no passive consumers) and who went on to be influential contributors to the development of many others. I have woven together the data and evidence gathered from this band of explorers and the systematising of ideas growing out of the experience and process we engaged in – as well as my related later experience and thought as outlined in the final chapter. As I faced the project of this further book, unwritten, I asked myself, "Am I still up to it?" Once envisioned, however, this was a rhetorical question. I found myself working on a path of increasing and often intense absorption as the varied parts and accompanying thought of the volume grew into its present state. I am very glad to have taken the plunge and emerge now feeling the result is a kind of gift to those who value and would wish to draw on it.

Godfrey T. Barrett-Lennard

Contents

1	The “Armidale” Residential Workshops: Concept and Beginnings	1
	Part I ‘As It Happened’: The Process Documented	9
2	Finding Our Difficult Way: Group X’s Transcribed Beginning	11
	Session 1: Who Are We and What Do We <i>Want</i> ?	13
	Session 2: On What Is <i>Variously</i> Felt to Be Happening and Possible	37
3	Mid-Journey Advance and the Late Stages of Group X	45
	Process Illustration from Session 6, as a Corner is Turned	46
	Highs and Lows of the Connected Searching in Sessions 14 and 15	57
	The Process in Ending-Sessions 16 and 17	72
	Concluding Observations	93

4	Tracing the More Relaxed Journey of Group Y and Glimpses of Further Groups	97
	The Course of Group Y, Via Sessions 1, 2, 3, 7 and 14	98
	Conclusion: Group Y and Other Groups	127
5	Session-by-Session Member Ratings of Process and Effects	131
	The Rating Form and Data from <i>Workshop 1</i>	132
	The Session Rating Patterns from <i>Workshop 2</i>	143
	Analysis of Session Questionnaire Ratings from Workshop 3	147
	Summary and Conclusion	151
	Chapter Appendix	152
Part II	Outcome Reports and Estimations	155
6	After-the-Workshop Reflections by Letter Report	157
	The Follow-Up Letter Reports From X and Y Group Members of Workshop 1	158
	Feedback Letters From Selected Participants in Workshop 2	177
	Conclusion	190
7	Workshop Outcomes from Formal Six-Month Follow-Up Data	193
	The Low-Structure Inquiry (Part A) and Results	194
	Multiple-Choice Questionnaire (Part B) and Results	197
	The Process Climate of the Workshop Groups, Looking Back	202
	Chapter Appendix	206
	References	209
8	Ten Years Later: Long-Term Follow-Up Via Life Events Study	211
	The Life Events Questionnaire: Form and Application	212
	Examples From the Life Events Records	214

Life Episodes Data and Coding	217
The Pattern of Coded Results	220
Summing Up	223
References	224
9 Armidale Remembered and Participant After-Journeys:	
<i>Interview Perspectives</i>	225
Interview Aims and Structure	225
The Individual Interview Meetings	227
Concluding Observations	269
Part III Theory and Wider Application	271
10 A Theoretical Understanding of Intensive Experiential Groups	273
The Species Nature of Experiential Learning Groups	274
Complementary Views of the Process	276
Group Structure and Other Built-In Features	295
Consequences: A Perspective on Outcome	300
Overview and Conclusions	304
References	308
11 Armidale and Beyond: A Path of Events and Thought	311
The Armidale Workshops Extended	311
Workshop Features to Preserve and Improve	316
Education and Training in Experiential Groups: A Personal View	319
Small Experiential/Encounter Groups in Big Group Contexts	321
Experiential Groups in Independent Practice Contexts	323
Conclusion	326
References	328

Appendix 1: Studying Outside Relationships Viewed Pre- and Post-workshop	331
Appendix 2: Discovery Learning Exercises for Student Readers and Interested Others	339
Index	349

List of Tables

Table 5.1	<i>Was this session productive for you? Rating levels in Group X</i>	135
Table 5.2	<i>Rating means: by session (1–17) and by question – Group X</i>	136
Table 5.3	<i>Rating means: by session and by question – Group Y</i>	141
Table 5.4	<i>Mean rating levels, person by person, for Groups X and Y</i>	142
Table 5.5	<i>Mean rating levels, person by person, for groups R and S</i>	145
Table 5.6	<i>Mean item correlations from session questionnaire data for Workshop 3: first two clusters of meaningfully interrelated items</i>	147
Table 5.7	<i>Daily means from grouped session questionnaire items in Workshop 3</i>	150
Table 7.1	<i>Results for follow-up items 1 and 2</i>	198
Table 7.2	<i>Results for follow-up items 3 and 4</i>	199
Table 7.3	<i>Results for follow-up items 5 and 6</i>	200
Table 7.4	<i>Results for follow-up items 7 and 8</i>	202
Table 7.5	<i>Frequencies of rating choices on bipolar scales of group qualities</i>	203
Table 8.1	<i>The system and frequency of classes of formative event</i>	219

1

The “Armidale” Residential Workshops: Concept and Beginnings

The workshops that are focal in this book contributed to the emergence of a distinctive approach to learning and development, especially for counsellors and related helping professionals. Extending from my Preface, a sense of responsibility as well as interest, a desire to search into and develop a fuller knowing of the phenomenon focused on here, and a belief that the story and implications of this innovation can be of valuable interest to others, all energised me in preparing this book. Although extensively documented, it is not the same account I would or could have given when the experience involved was close behind me. As I pored over the detailed records, many of the events and participants came to life again, but not in a replay of the original experience. I view it now from a consciousness that has moved on and that I believe permits greater objectivity as well as a freshness of perspective. This short chapter pictures the starting context, aims, setting and arrangements for the events it focuses on, and it foreshadows the full scope of this volume.

The working plans for the first “therapeutic counselling workshop,” initiated by the author, were conceived and announced in 1962. This step tested the waters of likely interest and of preference in regard to timing. Who the workshop was for, who would lead it and their pertinent

2 Experiential Learning for Professional Helpers

background, the expected scope of the experience, and the accommodation setting and likely direct cost were outlined. The announcement specified that the University of New England departments of Adult Education and Psychology were jointly sponsoring this innovation and that the “seminar/workshop” would run for two weeks in February *or* May 1963. The crisp portrayal of essential information was circulated to a range of practice, training and other groups and key individuals in the mental health field across Australia, with content as follows:

The seminar/workshop will be open to people already engaged professionally in psychological counselling, guidance or therapy. It is expected that those taking part will represent a variety of disciplines and that they will be working in such settings as child guidance clinics, mental hospitals or out-patient clinics, school guidance or counselling services, marriage guidance and other social service agencies, vocational guidance or rehabilitation services, university counselling services or private clinical practice.¹

The general purpose... is to assist those taking part to further develop their capacities to engage in psychologically helpful relationships with other people. Related to this practical objective, there will be opportunity for members to extend their thinking on such topics as (a) the nature of constructive personality change, (b) the qualities of a therapeutic relationship, (c) characteristics of personal maturity or optimal psychological functioning, (d) the place of values in psychological therapy and (d) recent theoretical and research developments in client-centred therapy.

[Participants] will not be confronted with a pre-arranged syllabus or programme of topics, and every effort will be made to ensure that the specific content of the workshop experience does, in fact, grow out of the thinking and concerns of those who choose to engage in it. Material resources will include ... a specially prepared collection of books, reprints and tape recordings and films of therapy interviews. These will be available to members to draw on individually or (in the case of films and tapes) for use in collective meetings.

My background as workshop leader was briefly sketched, as were the arrangements for residential college accommodation during university

¹ This paragraph and the first sentences of the two that follow apply also to the main announcement of the second workshop in the series, held the next year – with three facilitators and groups.

vacation time and the fact that enrolment would be limited to allow for the intensive experience envisioned. Responding enquiries and applications quickly began, and there was back and forth correspondence by postal mail (email and mobile phones did not exist). A general follow-up communication from an Adult Education colleague who managed the more formal administrative communication indicated that over 30 people had indicated serious interest, and it confirmed the May 1963 timing. In a further message, we gave the significant fresh information that my colleague Prof Pat Pentony from the Australian National University had accepted an invitation to co-lead the workshop with me.

We also advised that our preparation of the collection of resource materials included recent papers by Carl Rogers, Eugene Gendlin, myself and a range of other contributors. Some of the included papers not readily available in published form were to be duplicated so that members could keep them. In the event, our total list included about 60 items. It had occurred to us that some members may have papers of their own of potential interest to others taking part, and we offered to prepare copies of one such article of modest length from any participant, for distribution to interested others. Thus, although we anticipated an experiential discovery-learning emphasis, there was organised provision for people to study professionally relevant materials, in keeping with their practical and theoretical interests. As far as possible in its context, the workshop would be a cooperative enterprise, although new in kind to virtually all participants. Exactly what kind this would be, in terms of process, could not be specified fully; only its broad qualities and basic direction were envisioned.

The therapeutic counselling topic and context of the workshop, the carefully worded aim of participants being able to further develop their capacities to engage in psychologically helpful relationships and the stated reliance on content growing out of member concerns all implied a responsive context and hinted at a growth aim. The idea of a personally involving experiential learning emphasis was we thought implicit though not directly stated. There was considerable reference to the collection of available readings and recordings and various theoretical and professional issues that might be addressed. Looking back, there was sufficient ambiguity about the process of the first workshop for readers accustomed

to quite structured training/learning contexts to have somewhat different expectations than those already acquainted with the idea of learning through intensive experiential interaction.

In some respects, the experience and even style of the workshop began before members arrived in Armidale. It included the acknowledging correspondence and periodic follow-ups to the original announcement, and the stimulation for some people of refreshing or extending their reading from Rogers' writing or other pertinent sources. Many intending members would have considered and discussed with colleagues what they hoped to get out of the experience. This advance anticipation no doubt was more specific in the case of those who came to the second workshop, a year later – most of whom knew someone who had taken part the first time or had heard or seen reports of it. Indeed it was clear that some members had been strongly encouraged to attend Workshop 2 by colleagues or people senior to them in the same organisation. They had a better idea in advance of what they were getting into, and thus were not pioneering and creating the nature of their experience *de novo* as much as the first group were. Two substantially qualified members of the first workshop were co-leaders with me the second time, each of us facilitating a group. They were not as steeped in client-centred thinking as Pat Pentony and I had been and there was somewhat more diversity in leadership style.

The workshop members met formally (there had been an informal welcome the previous evening) as a whole group on the first morning for self-introductions, final practical briefing and, especially, to work out and settle the composition of the two subgroups and their meeting times. Just how to divide the membership was a primary issue for collective decision. I have no record of exactly how we did this, but know that it was an "inefficient" participatory process in which everyone could have a voice and many did. Probably, chance played a part, as it would have done, for example, by assigning every second person in an alphabetical listing or in their seating arrangement in the whole meeting, in a "draft" breakdown that could then be refined on other grounds. One of the grounds that I remember came up was to avoid placing people who worked in the same setting together, into the same workshop group. It is likely also that Pentony and I effectively tossed a coin after the groups were

provisionally composed to see which one each of us would work with. Whatever the exact process, opening it to all suggestions and views in a group problem-solving process no doubt helped to set the tone of what followed, although evoking a degree of impatience in some participants.

Pentony and I had significant research as well as practical interests. As the workshop initiator-leaders, we felt responsible to carefully gather information that would be helpful in evaluating the process and impact of what we thought could be a deeply involving and eventful experience, one that some people might struggle with and have strong reactions to. Being in residence together and meeting day after day in the groups was potentially a pressure-cooker situation, and we did not take it for granted that everyone would react positively all the time to the exchanges and dynamics or feel a continuity of valued learning and/or growth. With participant consent, the group sessions were regularly audio taped-recorded for later study, *and* short rating forms were answered by each person at the end of each of the morning and afternoon two-hour group sessions (17 in all). Given that the groups met for self- and interactive exploration of professional and personal issues, without set agendas or direct guidance, there was considerable experimentation and unevenness in the process (see next chapters), including instances of stressful frustration as well as freeing new insight, and a constant evolution of mutual awareness and relationships.

The residential feature meant that opportunities for significant contact continued in the workshops beyond the organised experiential group sessions. This interchange naturally was more selective and sometimes happenstance, more socially informal though at times intense, and often one-on-one or in small clusters. Self-inquiry, expressive behaviour and relationships evolved through the whole experience and in the absence of immediately present engagements at home and in work. The regular official groups tended to be highly eventful and in the foreground of the participants' experience and what challenged them, as will be further documented through this report. Members soon came to feel strong affiliation with their ("my") group and its emergent character, struggles and ethos and to feel a considerably looser affiliation with the other parallel group or groups. They were of course privy to the flow of exchanges and evolving interconnection of people and meaning in their own group,

while having no first-hand experience of the process in another group. Given the residential context and cross-group relationships, people did gain impressions of the other group(s).

The first nine chapters of this book flow in their detail from Workshops 1, 2 and 3 in the original series, including all the after-workshop and later follow-up information from the participant members. Along the way, there also are some observations from related contexts. These include a workshop, also held in the same setting but outside the data-rich series in focus here, conducted by Carl Rogers during his visit to Australia early in 1965. The further chapters, as noted in the Preface, have a wider compass although also centred in the experiential group sphere. Chapter 10, in particular, articulates an embracing descriptive theory growing out of the author's whole journey of experience and thought in this area – as a region of special interest intensified by the Armidale workshops and benefiting from much later experience. It is long incubated and an integrative satisfying contribution in its own right.

Some of the Armidale participants went on to return for one or more further workshops, each time with its new membership and potentialities. Given the challenging new approach to professional development and learning, the relatively small disciplinary circles in Australia that members came from, the depth of their involvement and the arousal of interest among peers at home, the workshops were quickly visible and variously appraised from the outside. Besides the informal follow-up interchanges, some participants gave talks and people involved continued to process their experience. We invited feedback letters from participants on their retrospective view of the workshop relatively soon after they got home again. This was valuable information as closely documented in Chap. 6. Follow-up data were gathered systematically after half a year had passed and from a reduced sample after 10 years – and is presented and discussed in Chaps. 7, 8 and 9.

The second (1964) and third (1965) workshops were not simply a replication of the first although the same in concept, duration and setting. Each of the experiential groups (seven in all) was distinctive in the background experience, expectations and mix of members and leaders. Being without precedent in Australia, the pioneering first workshop probably attracted the most venturesome souls, although all groups in

significant ways were venturing into the unknown. As each person and group felt their way, there was a degree of struggle and sometimes conflict. Experienced setbacks were not uncommon and the evolving dyadic and group relationships naturally varied. This work speaks to differences between the groups examined as well as to their overall character – each group with intense and deeply involving episodes. New experience and even crises in which established patterns do not suffice, or don't work, create potential for fresh learning.

Shortly after Workshop 1 ended, I wrote to everyone, mainly about the circulation of articles that were copied for all workshop members. The letter, in personal voice from that time, also expresses something not unlike my present reaction. It reads, in part:

I have started to listen back to the recordings of our early sessions, and find this fascinating. It is not just like reliving something deeply felt (although it has this quality to some degree), but a different and exciting experience in its own right. I hesitate to say more until you have had an opportunity to crystallise, perhaps still tentatively, your own after-thoughts and reactions relating to the quality and significance of the experience.

This message came to people on their home grounds away from the workshop immersion and may have further encouraged their communication back to us with their own personal after reflections (see Chap. 6).

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 stay with the rich content of the dialogue itself from the daily group sessions. They set forth and examine extended transcript material from the two rather different groups from Workshop 1, and what these recordings reveal about the unfolding ways participants engaged with each other in sharing and declaring their varied feelings, attitudes, ideas and interactive/relational responses and shifts within the workshop crucible. The chapters focusing on session content are complemented by evidence from participant ratings made at the end of each group session and the highly communicative feedback letter reports of members when they were at home again in their personal lives and work.

Further chapters turn focused attention to the extensive and varied follow-up research information from workshop members, gathered both short term and up to ten years later. This interconnecting tapestry of

information illuminates a domain of outcomes and indirect effects. The unfolding of systematic theory that is presented in the next to last chapter can be viewed as a different kind of significant outcome of the workshop and later experience in groups. Finally, the flow of ensuing residential workshops in Armidale is traced, and still later adaptations are considered, in course teaching (counselling and small group fields) and private practice contexts.

Since Workshop 1 was quite new and unique in its organisation and nature at the time, there was no established pattern of expectations regarding its specific process or effects that should flow from it. A “cost,” twinned with exciting opportunity of breaking this new ground, meant that no descriptive reports from close examination of very similar intensive workshops or their outcomes were available for potential members to consult. As the subsequent member letter reports and follow-up data were coming in, audio-recorded regular sessions of the two distinctive groups in Workshop 1 were being laboriously draft transcribed. I invite the reader to accompany me next through the opening substance of this story, especially as conveyed in the highly process-informative member dialogue reproduced in the next three chapters. Chapter 2 starts with an introduction to the challenges entailed in producing and presenting this rich content. Each of these chapters, and those that follow, also have a place in the final appendix to the book, which presents follow-up exercises for their interest and value to readers, especially students – as also referred to in the Preface.

Part I

**'As It Happened': The Process
Documented**

2

Finding Our Difficult Way: Group X's Transcribed Beginning

Transcribing group sessions with voices from up to 19 people is a considerable challenge. And a single two-hour session fully transcribed and from a confidently verbal group can easily run to 10,000 words. Typing assistants worked on recordings of at least 25 group sessions from the first Armidale workshop, and up to half of their typescripts were closely checked to achieve as complete a record as possible in terms of identifying each speaker and their whole wording. This chapter is largely filled with generous portions of the dialogue in the first two regular meetings of “Group X” in the first workshop. Some notes are inserted, principally to more fully track the process around omitted passages. Chapter 3 follows the process through the mid-point and late stages of the same group’s life over the course of the workshop.

The unscripted group dialogue between very active participants finding their way remains as fresh as it was originally. Some of the members, however, are no longer alive, and the others by now are elderly. With the half-century time lapse, confidentiality recedes as an issue and minimal disguise is needed. Even so, here and in later chapters, substitute names are used and other identifying details such as the exact place of work are

generally omitted. My own name (informally, Goff), when spoken by members, is left in the transcript. Otherwise, designations such as Lx (leader of Group X) identify utterances by the official group leader.

Workshop 1 began, as described in Chap. 1, with an organisational meeting of all participants, most of whom were already checked into a university residential college, during vacation time. This meeting provided them with further information about various practicalities and an opportunity to work out together the broadly planned division into the two experiential groups, and set the specific timing of regular group sessions. The breakdown of the groups (Chap. 4 centres on “Group Y”) was largely determined in this meeting. Suggestions were made, there was considerable discussion, and chance certainly played a part. I have no notes on the exact process, but the interested listening to various ideas and the consultative problem-solving spirit of that meeting helped to set the stage for what followed.

Over the last half-century, idiomatic language has further evolved, swearing is less inhibited (hardly any occurred in this gender-mixed workshop), and of course, masculine pronouns are no longer used for either gender as was the case then. In direct quotations, I prefer not to change the original wording unless to reduce “uhms” and repetitions, edit out non-essential parts of the longer statements and *slightly* streamline the included text of hesitant or cumbersome expressions. Dots (ellipses), such as ..., imply that words have been omitted. Square brackets enclose words occasionally substituted or added to clarify meanings. Four or five dots imply that whole sentences or paragraphs have been skipped. Complete omissions of the contributions of one or more speakers are mostly signposted by three long dashes, — — —. Double or triple hyphens usually indicate that a person’s speech has been interrupted or has tailed off. *The participants’ own statements taken from transcripts are reproduced in italics*, and inserted comments and explanation for the reader are in different fonts.

The numbering of each member’s included statements, *in the first session only*, has been retained for convenient reference. The selection opens with the self-introductions by all members of the group, indicative of their varied styles. These introductions begin to speak of why each person is there and their varied expectations and preferences. The situation

is novel to most of them, in the basic aspect of having no predetermined agenda or clearly defined procedure. Naturally, some people speak more often and/or at more length than others do, although all seem able to express themselves confidently. *Their speech is reproduced in italics.* Lx opens the interchange, feeling his way:

Session 1: Who Are We and What Do We Want?

Lx-1: ...I suggest that we begin by giving each person an opportunity to comment briefly on what you hope will come out of this experience for you personally. Perhaps we could make it a bit more specific than that. What sort of immediate questions or interests or aims occur to you at this moment? Either that, or the more general question of, simply, what is it that brings you here? If you would be agreeable to our starting out this way and going round... I would be happy to say, since I've suggested it, a word or two in a more personal way than I have shared so far with reference to myself. How does anyone else feel about this procedure as a starting point?

Everyone wore name tags, and most were at or near the starting point of their acquaintance. The idea of self-introductions made sense to those who responded, and no one signalled objection to this way of beginning. In this unknown and just-getting-to-know-each-other situation, most conversation at the start was carefully expressed, and it began after a brief pause before the group leader resumed, still feeling his way and (in retrospect) “explaining” more than facilitating optimally.

Lx-2: ... Well, I haven't thought out what I wanted to say, really. I have been... I feel quite fortunate in having had the experience that I did have in working with Rogers, particularly in the period of working with him in the University of Chicago Counselling Centre.... I've also had the opportunity of being quite free to work with groups on a number of occasions in whatever way I personally felt was most congenial and productive... And I felt that if there were others, as there proved to be, like yourselves, who were interested in this general approach to therapy and human relationships, then it would

be something I would be very interested in doing, to organise an experience to make it possible for you to pursue that interest further. And so, basically that's why I'm here ... and my motives for initiating this venture. I feel just a little bit apprehensive, less so at the moment than I was a day or two ago, about how it would really work out in practice. Do you [speaking to Ralph, next to Lx] feel like – would you be willing to take the next turn?

Ralph-1: Well, I'll go a little way down the road. I'm [name, department and institution]. I think that the first idea you proposed I really couldn't say because I don't have any particular expectations in terms of issues or whatever. The second, what did bring me here, what I'm looking for – I think first the idea of a workshop in therapeutic counselling, when the co-leaders both had experience with Rogers, I expected this would be part of it and I look forward to this part of it too. And I wanted to get together ... with other people who I presumed to be especially interested in therapy and I seem to recently have not found so many people who are terribly interested in therapy. This latter thing was rather important to me.

Anne-1: Yes, I'm _____ [name] and I'm a psychologist in an adult unit in [city] and I also work in marriage guidance, training some counsellors and doing some counselling. And my objects in coming here, well, first of all because I hope to be able to talk to some other counsellors and some other therapists, and particularly those interested in Rogerian methods of counselling. But I also feel that I have some reservations and some conflicts that I'd like to work out about this theory and I thought this might be a good way of doing it.

Mary-1: I'm _____ and I'm a social worker with [names organisation] and I think that I was interested in, also, in clarifying my own ideas about the values of these techniques and different kinds of therapeutic approaches. And whether in the tremendous hurly-burly of pressures in the family agency whether it's possible to use Rogerian techniques fully. And I'm also very interested in group therapy as such...

Barry-2: [Gives name and city] I'd like to listen a little, and have my say later if I may.

Cliff-2: [Gives name, position and institution]. As one who is fairly sympathetic to the Rogerian approach, I came here realising, like you, that since this was organised by Goff and Pat Rogerian methods were going to be put forward pretty strongly. I had hoped that I'd get a chance to rethink... [and] I had hoped that we might have a fairly wide cross-section of interests.... I

think probably I'm correct in saying that amongst the group I've met so far there are a number of people who are – who wouldn't class themselves, let's say, as Rogerian counsellors, who are interested to know more about it and are quite sceptical, perhaps, on some points... This is one of the reasons that added interest to me because I think that if we have this sort of person present, this makes us rethink our own point of view.

Will-1: I'm [name]. I'm a psychologist with [organization and city]. I'm a bit confused about why I'm here really. Originally I got very interested in Rogers through his writing, and I wrote to him and asked could I come over there and [indicates why this did not work out]—and I continued to be interested in him, notwithstanding this, and eventually I was referred to Goff and wrote to him... I suppose that basically I came because I was interested in Rogers, that I wanted to amplify my views... But—and as far as the feelings are concerned I too feel somewhat anxious that you're going to get far too personal, and consequently, I feel some anxiety about the situation when I didn't expect this.

Ros-1: I'm [name, organisation and city]. We've been acquainted with Rogers from way back because this has been the basis of the approach of our training. There is a great attraction for me personally in coming to be part of a free group and to also be involved in relationships with people who are involved in relationships with clients and with patients. .. The organisation have what they want from me too and I'm involved with counsellors once they have done their training and are doing case work. And it was hoped that through me coming what benefit that I achieved as—or that I had—could be disseminated amongst them gradually over years probably, and also they are interested in what personal effect the group media has.

James-1: I'm aware of a surge of anxiety at the moment. [Gives name, profession, institution and city]. I'm not too sure exactly what my expectations are in coming here. I think I've always been mostly interested in therapy and I have found, too, in working in the unit that I am in that I need to have quite a large concern with training. With these two areas ... I'd like to be able to learn more, and I hope too to see Rogerian methods in a different perspective to what I have in the past. I haven't always felt that they really did apply very much to my particular work. In fact, I have partly tried them and I partly rejected them. So that I hope that I may get a rather different perspective here. I hope, too, that what I can pick up here would be of value in taking back for training purposes into the [names setting].

Arthur-1: [Gives name, positions, organisation and city]. I came here for two reasons: One is an academic reason—I have a strong leaning towards the Rogerian method, technique and attitude. I want to know more about it and to see why it works when I'm involved. ... Secondly, for my own mental health I came because my life is streamlined in such a way that for months and months I'm counselling other people, I'm an authority figure, I'm referring people, I have to make decisions about people in all sorts of ways. And what I anticipated, and it would appear that here I'm going to be involved in a group. And I can express myself in the group and through the group and while someone else is doing a sort of leadership—also I can see it's going to be a leaderless group. I have some experience on that, I like that, and two years ago had it in University and I thought, well, here is the same thing...

Dave-2 [already self-introduced]: I think I can best describe my motivation by a moth and a candle. I had a growing conviction that I needed to learn somehow to manage better as a counsellor—I had a look at some of Rogers' writings recently and have come more and more to the conclusion that I wondered whether this way of working was for me at all. It seemed to me to be demanding more and more a particular kind of person and I very much doubted not only that I was this kind of person but very much doubted that I wanted to become this kind of person. So I wanted to gain from this seminar what I could in the way of understanding people better, but with very real reservations about how far I wanted to go in this. Now, I knew this was going to happen and I can see that it is happening—a feeling of pressure towards involvement beyond the level at which I anticipate I am going to feel comfortable... and I have a combination then of anxiety and expectancy to see how this is going to work out. Trying at the moment to sit on the fence and just see what happens for a while.

Tess-1: I'm [gives name, organisation, city and profession]. I think from the personal point of view one of my motives in wanting to come is that I've been working for four years in a busy clinic with a very stable kind of staff and we know each other so well that we communicate entirely in shorthand, sometimes rather vulgar shorthand, and I felt it was time I experienced some other people's ideas and had to both explain myself more clearly and allow other people to explain themselves more clearly than is customary with us. From the point of view of Rogerian methods I've always been very interested to discover whether the kind of people who are Rogerian are one particular kind

of person. Being myself intensely aggressive, very dogmatic and suffering from extreme doubts about everything under the sun, I doubt very much whether I'm any good at the non-directive technique. I doubt even more, and I think this is more important, whether I'm very receptive to being managed in this way and I should be very interested to find out how the group manages my aggression (laughing).

Janet-1: I'm _____. A short while ago my husband retired ... which meant that we stopped travelling from place to place and we've settled down [indicates new situation]. I felt it was important to me as a person to be able to continue these interests I have in social work and psychiatry and that sort of thing. And so I got in touch with Goff and he suggested that I join this group and I'm very happy to do so. I'm inclined towards the Rogerian methods but not entirely convinced by them.

Chris-1: My name is _____ from (city and organisation). I was originally trained in the Education Department and was a teacher in schools for many years, and then joined research and guidance and somehow then I found myself faced with the opportunity to begin [names new probation service he heads] So that I don't think it is too extreme to say that the system that grows in my state, at least immediately, will be just as good or bad as I am. We have – I have been fortunate to be given a very free hand Our primary duty [is such that] we can't be too non-directive. But I felt that the more skilful we become in counselling, the more the supervisory aspect of our work can recede into the background, and we may be able to fulfil eventually my ideals that [our service] should be more heavily therapeutic than just supervisory...

Keith-1: I'm _____ from _____ I'm in charge of the school there, which presumes to offer what we call educational therapy... My specific interests are I think in trying to determine what we mean by a relationship with people and to then in some way orient the sort of knowledge that I hope to receive from – to gain from this workshop – to orient this to children, feeling at the moment that whenever I read about Rogerian application to children and from seeing people who claimed to have such an orientation I thought they did it very badly. So this is what I have come to look for.

Ellen-1: I'm _____. I'm a psychiatric social worker employed training marriage guidance counsellors with _____ [organisation]. I wanted to know what it would feel like to be in a group-centred group. I'm interested in failures, because it seems to me that all techniques of interviewing are built

up on those that work. So consequently we never make predictions or try to falsify our hypotheses and we build up a whole system of interviewing purely from the ones it has worked with. We don't do very much looking at failures or why they failed. I'm also interested ... in all the things that Rogers ... and all the writers of other text books don't deal with, because from my experience ... there are always things that come up which the principles don't fit... I thought perhaps I'd have the opportunity to discuss these things in a group of this kind.

Roger-2: My name is _____ associated with (gives organisation), and my interest is both in the educational and in the therapeutic side of things. In my training for a counselling situation I found myself fed with very heavy doses of Rogers and I found it necessary at certain stages to modify some of these principles enunciated by Rogers and I am keen to evaluate this position as I see it today. Secondly, part of my function is also in the training of counsellors, lay counsellors, and again here I'm desirous of developing better techniques and procedures as well as in assessing further the degree to which the Rogerian approach can be embraced by some people and not others in virtue of their personality pattern. Further, I'm hoping that this permissive workshop group situation will be for me also a growth procedure and that it might lead to a greater degree of self-understanding.

Barry acknowledges - interspersed with good-natured comments from others - that he is due to give some kind of self-introduction that he delayed early in the session, but he is still hesitating and there is a pause that initiates a discussion of silences, starting with the next comment. (The numbering here of each person's statements is not continuous since there are omissions.)

Dave-3: I'm reminded of a number of times I've been told and heard other people being told that silence is not something you should worry about - you must learn to tolerate silence. -

Tess-3: I think one of the difficulties of silences is knowing what an earth they are about. If they are an aggressive silence or consenting silence or a nice peaceful silence this is fine. But I think sometimes though in silences we wonder what on earth do we do now, and I'm not sure that this kind of silence should go on too long.