

# Considering Counsellor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

## Part 1: Looking Back in Order to Look Forward

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### Abstract

Professional education is integral to the life of a profession. This article offers an historical review of counsellor education in Aotearoa New Zealand from the point of view of educators in one programme. It suggests that inquiry about what has been might contribute to shaping what might ensue in counsellor education. Suggesting that counsellor education might be described as on the verge of entering a third phase, the article traces the first two phases, reviewing influences of government policy, the wider profession, other stake-holders, and counsellor educators themselves on the directions and forms that counsellor education has taken. Following these traces through history, the article looks toward a third phase, offering a series of questions about the possible opportunities and leadership responsibilities available to counselling education and educators. By ending with inquiry, the article seeks to make a contribution to a dialogue among counsellor educators that might actively contribute to shaping the future of counsellor education. This article is Part 1 of this discussion; Part 2 follows in the third section of this volume.

**Keywords:** counsellor education, history of counsellor education, counsellor education in New Zealand, counsellor registration

An inaugural national counsellor education conference in December 2011 and the publication of a special counsellor education edition of the *New Zealand Journal of Counselling* are significant milestones for counsellor education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Together, these events bring counsellor education toward the centre of the life of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC), at a time when the registration environment and global economic and social changes are producing a changing climate for counselling and counsellor education. As a team of counsellor educators at the

University of Waikato, we intend this position paper to be one contribution to a wider dialogue about possible futures for counsellor education.

This article suggests that counsellor education in New Zealand, shaped by and responding to changes within socio-ethno-political culture—local and global—is entering into a third phase of development. In order to consider what counsellor education might look like in this contemporary third phase, the article offers a history of counsellor education in Aotearoa New Zealand. There is value, we suggest, in looking to the past in order to go forward—*hoki whakamuri kia anga whakamua*.

For the purposes of this position paper, we conceptualise counsellor education in Aotearoa New Zealand as involving three phases, each characterised by different external and internal politics that have offered both opportunities and constraints. This article reviews the first two phases, considers government policies, takes account of the influence of various stakeholders, and documents the forms that counsellor education has taken in response to these shaping influences. It focuses on aspects of cooperation and competition within counsellor education and between counsellor education and the wider field.

The first phase, the article suggests, is characterised by centralisation and relative homogeneity, and the second by growing diversity, changing standards, and the struggle, noted by Miller (2001), for counsellor educators to shape counsellor education among competing stakeholder influences. The article concludes by raising a series of questions, for wider discussion, about possible implications of this history, and responsibilities that counsellor education might take up in response to the conditions of a contemporary third phase. A companion article, Part 2, which appears later in this volume, considers the future of counsellor education in the context of the regulatory debate.

### **Phase 1: Beginnings**

In its first phase, counsellor education in New Zealand was characterised by two forms of training. Universities were funded by the Department of Education to offer graduate training for school guidance counsellors (mostly) and a small number of vocational guidance counsellors. Small numbers of community-based counsellors, privately funded, also trained in these programmes. At the same time, national social service organisations and local community agencies provided apprenticeship-style training to paid staff and/or volunteers. Counselling in both schools and communities arose in response to concerns about social conditions of the time, and was shaped by close relationships between government departments and those providing the training, as

we describe below. The following discussion focuses first on counsellor education in universities and, second, on apprentice-style counsellor training.

### *Counsellor training and education in universities*

The Education Amendment No. 2 Act (1964) required the provision of guidance and counselling in schools, and guidance counsellor positions were established in secondary schools in 1966. Those appointed to these positions, and therefore requiring counsellor training, were already professionals with academic or technical qualifications, recruited from the ranks of experienced teachers. While initially the training of school guidance counsellors was provided within the Department of Education, training was soon, in effect, contracted to newly developed programmes within Education faculties/departments at universities. By the 1980s, there were counsellor training programmes at Otago, Canterbury, Massey, Waikato and Auckland universities. Selection of students for these programmes was carried out by the schools, who appointed guidance counsellors in consultation with Department of Education Inspectors with responsibility for Guidance: Small (1981) objected to “the anomalous position of the university trainers having no voice at all in the selection of their students” (p. 258). At that time, a Department of Education representative was a full member of every appointment committee that appointed a school guidance counsellor, thus directly influencing the selection of students for counsellor training.

The curriculum for these early university programmes largely followed US models emphasising guidance, testing, careers, and programme delivery and evaluation. The syllabi were originally developed on the basis of American school counselling syllabi at a time when the agenda in the US was to identify talent for universities—particularly in maths and science—in the context of the Cold War and the space race with the USSR. However, in New Zealand, guidance counsellors were introduced to schools in response to social needs—concerns about juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy being paramount (see Besley, 2002)—thus from the outset producing something of a mismatch between the syllabi and the local context. Initially, the syllabi were relatively homogeneous across university counsellor education programmes due to the close relationship between programmes and the Department of Education, which funded guidance counsellor study. Programmes were originally (postgraduate) diplomas,<sup>1</sup>

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1. Hermansson (1981) noted that entry criteria included a degree, but “some provision” (p. 266) existed for informal admission of non-graduates.

for which counsellors undertook a year of academic study followed by a further year of practical work in their schools. The Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) had a significant role in lobbying for a graduate qualification (Webb, 2011). Along with school counsellors, smaller numbers of vocational guidance counsellors also studied within these university programmes, with specialist papers—in career counselling (also offered to school guidance counsellors), vocational guidance and assessment, or consultation—being offered to this group. Vocational guidance counsellor training in universities was funded by the Department of Labour, just as the school guidance counsellor training was funded by the Department of Education. These funding provisions fitted pre-1980s models, where government departments were highly active in labour market planning.

Brammer (1985) described the status of New Zealand secondary school guidance counselling and counsellor education, noting specifically issues identified by counsellor educators and administrators. Among these were the selection of candidates; alternative models of training (including field-based and extramural, compared with residential full-time programmes); standards and comparability; and accreditation and credentialing. Brammer noted that university counsellor education staff had been “key leaders in the development of school guidance counselling” and suggested that “innovative guidance programmes can meet urgent social and educational demands” (p. 19). Brammer also acknowledged the development of the independence, innovation, and distinctiveness of each programme, rather than duplication within and between courses, “trying to find the best balance between what is unique and what is uniform in university courses” (p. 20).

Over time, change in university programmes included a broadening of both the student community and the curriculum, along with the development of masters programmes, following the University of Canterbury's lead (Miller, 2001). What had previously been seen as *training*—a more limited vocational process of teaching skills—later became professional *education*, acknowledging the wide professional responsibilities of counsellors and signalling a philosophical shift similar to that in other fields, including teacher education. Curriculum development responded both to the changing student group—particularly practitioners already working in community agencies or those seeking to enter the field of counselling—and the changing circumstances of schools and life in New Zealand. For example, in some programmes, family and relationship counselling and/or mediation papers were introduced, and/or research became a requirement.

The ongoing development of curricula in university programmes, including a growing emphasis on counselling rather than guidance, saw a shift from counselling models imported directly from the US to more local developments of US-derived and locally generated approaches to counselling. For example, Canterbury had offered a New Zealand version of a micro-skills approach (Munro, Manthei, & Small, 1983), and later introduced a solution-oriented approach (Manthei, 1997); Massey adapted Carkhuff's Human Resource Development model into an eclectic model (Hermansson, 1992); and Waikato took up White and Epston's Antipodean narrative therapy (Monk & Drewery, 1994; Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997; Winslade & Monk, 2007). In the context of the Māori renaissance, and responding to what was described by Mason Durie (1989)<sup>2</sup> as a move "well overdue" in the profession of counselling, university counsellor education programmes began to give some attention to their responsibilities to educate counsellors beyond the prevailing monoculturalism of Western psychological theory and counselling practice.

Thus, through the first 30 years, characterised here as a first phase, counsellor education in Aotearoa New Zealand universities expanded from its mostly US-derived curricula and Eurocentric counselling model orientations and became more responsive to the local social, cultural, and educational environment. By the end of this first phase, considerable curriculum innovation had occurred in counsellor education in Aotearoa New Zealand universities, particularly through localisation of materials.

### *Counsellor training for Marriage Guidance (MG)*

The second form of counsellor preparation during this first phase might be characterised as an apprentice-style training. Preceding and then parallel to the development of guidance and counselling in schools was the emergence of marriage guidance counselling and education in the post-World War II years. Marriage Guidance's beginnings in New Zealand, as in the UK, emerged in response to the social conditions of the time, including the effects on families following the war. Particular to New Zealand was the moral panic associated with the Mazengarb Report (see Besley, 2002) about what were identified as gaps in the moral development of young people. In order to offer relationship education programmes and counselling for relationship difficulties, MG recruited volunteers from the community to be counsellors and educators, offering them in-house training, both regionally and nationally, after rigorous selection

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2. In 1985 Mason Durie gave a seminal address to the New Zealand Counselling and Guidance Association conference in Palmerston North, New Zealand, on which this later article was based.

processes. Through these years the Department of Justice provided funding for and had oversight of selection and training processes (see Daly, 1990; Penny, Epston, & Agee, 2008).

As a national organisation, MG was positioned to provide and deliver a counselling service in response to the legislation on marriage and relationships (the Domestic Proceedings Act 1970 and the Matrimonial Proceedings Act 1968), in addition to having “influence in the drafting of marriage legislation” (Daly, 1990, p. 31). According to Daly, MG gained a reputation for robustness in the training and supervision of its volunteer counsellors, who were assessed and accredited following “140 hours service and two years of training” (p. 52). At first, supervision was provided only by psychiatrists. New counsellors became apprentices to more senior counsellors. Initially Rogerian client-centred counselling was taught, and over time training extended to couple and family counselling, including attention to specific gender concerns (Daly, 1990). There appears to have been some growing sense of class and culture as considerations in counselling. The voluntary nature of MG changed in 1985 when payment for counsellors was introduced, and in 1986 the Department of Justice handed responsibility for selection and training to MG. This devolution is similar to that which occurred in Education, and across the social services sector, as the winds of political change swept through New Zealand, and counsellor training entered a new phase.

### *Other social service agencies*

Other social service agencies, many of them sponsored by churches, employed social service workers, including counsellors and family therapists. Through the 1970s and 1980s, training and education were generally in-house: often, those recruited were not expected to come with professional counselling or related qualifications. For example, at times clergy moved into social service roles, with in-service training in therapeutic practice complementing their theological training and pastoral ministry experience, or people moved from voluntary to paid roles once they had practice experience. In agencies where family therapy was practised, the team setting of family therapy, including the use of one-way mirrors, provided on the job training, mentoring and supervision.

Lifeline and Youthline also offered training for volunteers, originally for telephone counselling. Based on an Australian model, and beginning in Christchurch in 1964 and then in Auckland in 1966, Lifeline was established by the churches, and later became community-based. The Christchurch group adopted Australian training, standards,

and administrative systems (see <http://www.lifeline.co.nz/our-organisation.html>). Youthline eventually developed out of the Lifeline model, and was first established in Auckland in 1970 for callers typically between the ages of 13 and 21. Selection and training of volunteers was done in small groups by Lifeline leaders (Locke, 1981), methods that continue in these agencies today.

## **Phase 2: Deregulation and the free market**

The political, economic and social changes of late 20th-century Aotearoa New Zealand significantly reshaped counselling and counsellor education. At a time when a deregulated economy made life more difficult for significant numbers of New Zealanders, the decentralisation of the delivery of social services led to the growth of local social service agencies employing counsellors, as well as to increased opportunities for private practice supported by third party funding.<sup>3</sup> Decentralisation in education, including the separation of policy and delivery that followed from the Education Act 1989, loosened the ties between the (now) Ministry of Education and counsellor education programmes in universities. Schools now had the right to appoint counsellors without the involvement of a government department, and funding went to individual counsellors to manage their counsellor education. Decentralisation also saw accountability processes in tertiary education increase both the internal and external accountabilities of counsellor education programmes themselves: the days of programme leaders holding unaudited cheque accounts, for example, were over.

Deregulation of education led to significant growth in the number of counsellor education programmes, and new undergraduate programmes gave access to counsellor education to a wider range of people. From the relative homogeneity of the early university postgraduate programmes, counsellor education was offered by a much wider range of educational institutions, including private training organisations. We describe these developments further below.

### *Undergraduate counsellor training in polytechnics and private training establishments*

While university counsellor education programmes had emerged contemporaneously and for similar reasons, the later emergence of programmes in polytechnics and

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3. Miller (2004) notes the range of “government-supported funding arrangements” (p. 286) then available to fund counselling in New Zealand: Family Court; ACC; Children, Young Persons and their Families Service; and the Department of Social Welfare.

private training establishments (PTEs) in this second phase was much more varied. By the late 1980s, there was considerable demand for undergraduate training for those working in community agencies (Hermansson, 1990). In part, this demand represented a move from apprentice-style training to formal professional education.

Centralised labour market planning was no more, and the reforms that extended the free market to education provided an environment within which many new counsellor training and education programmes were set up. For example, one polytechnic that had previously run a Certificate in Social Services initiated a counselling-specific certificate in Māori counselling, in direct response to a request from the Māori community. The Māori counselling qualification came before a mainstream qualification at that institution. Hermansson (1990) had noted a need to appoint Māori to positions as trainers; it is not clear to what extent new programmes took up this opportunity. Another polytechnic, in response to opportunities provided by free market regimes in education, planted an undergraduate counsellor education programme in a number of regional cities and towns. For whatever reason, perhaps because of the academic and professional resources involved in counsellor education, many entrepreneurial developments did not endure.

The emergence of counsellor education in polytechnics and PTEs early in phase 2 occurred on the competitive terms of the free market economy, when education institutions were rewarded fiscally for the numbers of students enrolled: educational institutions competed for students; at times it was difficult for professional programmes to resist administrative priorities for high student numbers rather than selection and assessment for potential professional competence; and, as Webb (2000) noted, it became increasingly difficult for some programmes to access placements due to market saturation.

While university counsellor education programmes were housed in departments or faculties of education, the new programmes in polytechnics were often situated alongside other forms of social service practice, such as social work, health, or community work. Counsellor education students were educated in the same classes as other social service practitioners for a range of papers, perhaps offering opportunity for greater cross-disciplinary understanding. One might speculate whether shared professional education provides opportunity for counselling to be broadened—a development that Bemak and Hanna (1998) argued as critical to meeting the mental health needs of 21st-century clients—or whether professional distinctions become more clearly delineated. This question might be of particular interest since, towards the end of this phase,



professional registration was constructing scopes of—and thus limits of and distinctions among—various forms of social service and health practice.

From the original five counsellor education programmes in universities, by the end of phase 2 counsellor training and education programmes had become available in about 20 institutions, including universities, polytechnics, and PTEs. Undergraduate programmes in polytechnics and PTEs have introduced new dimensions to counsellor education and training. They have brought people who may not have had the professional, academic, or volunteer backgrounds required for entry into university programmes into professional education. These programmes tended to replace or develop alongside the apprentice-style preparation offered in the ongoing in-service peer training groups that had been available within social service agencies. Now, formal professional counselling qualifications were much more widely available, and social service agencies moved to employing those with such qualifications, in preference to providing in-house apprenticeship-style preparation of counsellors.

With the emergence of a wider range of levels and styles of professional preparation, the question of equivalence between qualifications began to emerge in the profession: what status did one-year undergraduate certificates have, for example, or how many hours of counselling practice should be included in a qualification that would give access to professional membership? How would NZAC as the professional association judge the qualifications of those seeking membership? Miller (2004) noted that in the absence of a nationally accredited curriculum in counsellor education, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) as a third-party funder of counselling established a set of training criteria that have influenced counsellor education programmes, perhaps without the critical input that might be expected from counselling academics.

At the same time, the status of counsellors who had not completed formal qualifications but who had extensive professional experience became less clear, as formal qualifications became the benchmark for professional status. In the early years of the 21st century, Relationship Services (formerly Marriage Guidance), for example, having changed from in-house training to employing counsellors with qualifications, sought to offer the opportunity for formal professional study to long-serving employees who did not have recognised qualifications. Responding to a request from Relationship Services, the University of Waikato introduced a specialist Post Graduate Certificate in Family and Relationship Counselling, which could offer entry to experienced practitioners without completed undergraduate degrees who would not ordinarily be eligible for postgraduate study. In a different response to the same dilemma, many

undergraduate programmes now offer systems of Recognition of Prior Learning that give academic credit for prior professional experience.

With burgeoning numbers of formal counsellor education programmes and the changed education policy environment of phase 2, systems of programme accreditation became more diverse. Universities continued to be responsible to a single central body—the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP), a committee of the Vice-Chancellors’ Committee—by whom new programmes and papers, and indeed any significant innovations, are approved through a process involving open peer review. Over time, polytechnic and PTE programmes have had varying processes for programme approval. Contemporary approval processes, while comprehensive, do not involve open peer review. At one time, a national Diploma in Counselling was offered through Te Kaiāwhina te Ahumahi (TKA), the social services industry training organisation, and taught by TKA-accredited providers using a unit standards format. Providers of undergraduate counselling programmes could offer all, some, or none of the unit standards. At the same time, some providers offered their own local diplomas and certificates, approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)<sup>4</sup> or delegated bodies.

At the end of this second phase of the development of counsellor education in Aotearoa, many polytechnics now offer an undergraduate degree, in some cases through collaboration with other polytechnics. This collaboration perhaps provides some curriculum consistency across cooperating institutions. The year 2003 saw the first graduates from a Māori counselling degree, Waikato Institute of Technology’s Bachelor in Social Services with an endorsement in Te Whiuwhiu o te Hau Māori Counselling (Moeke-Pickering, 2010). A recent development has been for polytechnics to move into postgraduate professional education in counselling, perhaps signalling further diversification as counsellor education enters a third phase. Approved through

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4. From the NZQA website:

NZQA’s role in the education sector is to ensure that New Zealand qualifications are regarded as credible and robust, nationally and internationally, in order to help learners succeed in their chosen endeavours and to contribute to New Zealand society.

NZQA is responsible for

- managing the New Zealand Qualifications Framework
- administering the secondary school assessment system
- independent quality assurance of non-university education providers
- qualifications recognition and standard-setting for some specified unit standards. (NZQA, n.d.)

NZQA, the peer review that these postgraduate programmes receive is not open, in contrast to postgraduate programme review through CUAP.<sup>5</sup>

### **Some particular points of tension during phases 1 and 2**

In sketching out these histories, this article has noted some points of tension. We now focus on two particular tensions that continue to shape contemporary counsellor education, and that are especially relevant as we move towards phase 3 in the context of the regulation environment. The first focus is on cooperation and competition *between* counsellor education programmes (and educators). A second focus is on cooperation and competition between counsellor education programmes/educators and the professional association, NZAC. Both sites of cooperation and competition raise important questions about the shaping of curriculum and standards in counsellor education, and thus the question of what counts as counselling.

#### *Cooperation and competition: Counsellor educators as a professional group*

In the early days of phase 1, as a small number of counsellor education programmes were set up in universities, academic staff in these programmes were known to each other and collaborated in various ways that included making significant leadership contributions to the professional association (see Hermansson, 1999). At the same time, as Miller (2001) has noted, a degree of dependence on students funded by a limited number of (school guidance counsellor and vocational guidance counsellor) government study awards produced competition among programmes, and limited the influence on policy that a “united group” (p. 79) of university counsellor educators might have had. Miller further traced the loss of influence of university-based counsellor educators, as programmes were developed outside universities under the auspices of different accrediting bodies, during what we have called phase 2. She noted that “because of government influence on counsellor training and because the university-based counsellor-educators did not establish a unified training programme, their full control of the curriculum was vulnerable to government changes in policy” (p. 86). A sense of threat to their monopoly on counsellor education, Miller suggested, brought university counsellor educators together, first by newsletter and then in formal meetings (p. 160). She noted that counsellor educators’ efforts “to claim jurisdiction of counsellor education involved competition and cooperation with each other and the government” (p. 86).

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5. A reviewer of this paper noted that the openness of CUAP review is dependent on the active and critical participation of other universities.

The University Counsellor Educators' Network's (UCEN) interests were wide-ranging, including sharing information about government funding and university processes, efforts to influence government policy (Miller, 2001), and undertaking research (see, for example, Manthei et al., 1994) as a contribution to building a research culture in New Zealand and thereby making a claim for the status of counsellor educators. As programmes developed in polytechnics and private training establishments, there were effects for UCEN. The interest group that would meet at national NZAC conferences widened to include those who taught in a range of programmes, gathered together under a "trainers" umbrella; the focus of meetings shifted, and it became more difficult to establish a shared agenda in brief time frames, particularly with changes in personnel in many programmes outside universities. For a time the UCEN group did not meet, and when it did, teachers in other programmes questioned their exclusion from these meetings. This point of tension remains: what do counsellor educators have in common as a professional group; what are the interests of various subgroups; and in what ways and with what effects do we cooperate and compete with each other?

#### *Cooperation and competition: Counsellor educators and NZAC*

Another tension arises in the relationship between the counsellor educators and NZAC. As we have noted, counsellor educators were integrally involved in the development of the professional association—initially the New Zealand Counselling and Guidance Association—and graduates of their programmes became the Association's early members. Over time, various government policy changes and developments within the professional association itself came together to reduce the influence of counsellor educators (Miller, 2001).

In the absence of registration, professional membership increasingly became the means to access and the standard for third-party funding, including from ACC and the Family Court, as well as to employment. Thus, the criteria for membership became a central concern of the professional association during phase 2, and NZAC introduced training criteria as a gate-keeping mechanism. A Code for Trainers was ratified in 1996 with little input from university counsellor educators, along with a list of minimum training criteria (Miller, 2001), policy developments that strengthened NZAC's role in setting standards for counsellor education. Miller noted that "the Executive of the Association was prepared to make decisions about training without even consulting counsellor-educators" (p. 164). In the midst of the burgeoning of education

programmes and membership applications, NZAC instigated a counsellor education programme approval process.<sup>6</sup> Most universities did not participate in this process because of a sense that it had been imposed by the professional association without consultation with counsellor educators who would have had significant experience to bring. In terms of competition and cooperation, it might be said NZAC won the competition for control of the training approval process but lost the cooperation, in that project, of a significant group of senior counsellor educators.

Alone among the university programmes, Waikato elected to participate in the approval process in the belief that scrutiny and approval of the programme would offer its graduates access to membership of NZAC (as became the case in the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's membership process; see BACP, 2009). A further reason for participation was that, since programme approval appeared to be a *fait accompli*, participating in trialling the application pack might offer an opportunity to influence the approval philosophy and process. However, since NZAC conceived of programme approval as a pragmatic rather than a philosophical process, any influence was limited. As well, expectations that programme approval would offer graduates direct access to membership in NZAC were not fulfilled. Membership processes became increasingly demanding, including for the students and graduates of NZAC-approved programmes. The increasingly complex individual membership processes may be read as demonstrating concern in the professional association about standards of counsellor education, or they may be understood as another expression of the ongoing movement of the association from a professional collective toward a regulatory authority.

Although a number of PTEs and polytechnics had also engaged in the programme approval process, NZAC decided in 2006 that it was not within its brief to approve and monitor programmes; approval and monitoring proved to be much more complex, difficult, and expensive tasks than had been envisaged. Indeed, NZAC discontinued the Training Committee, and as an organisation has taken little apparent interest in matters of counsellor education beyond requiring individual applicants to have formal counselling qualifications, and communicating changing membership requirements to counsellor education programmes, mostly in writing and once in a national meeting. Through its membership policies and processes, NZAC directs counsellor education

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6. The application pack for this process became generally available in 2001, according to the records held on file at the University of Waikato.

curricula without this direction being openly discussed, negotiated, or consulted about with the counsellor educators who research and theorise the professional practice of educating counsellors. Winslade, Crocket, Monk and Drewery's (2000) argument that counsellor education is itself a specialist professional practice appears to have gained little ground in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The matter of leadership in counsellor education is a vexed one. UCEN once offered something of a shared interest group, and subsequently efforts were made by various individuals to galvanise all educators to join a trainer network. A counsellor education interest group still meets at national conferences. However, while in various ways NZAC members and the Executive have made efforts to provide leadership in counsellor education, we reach this critical third phase without a clearly formed and led group which might represent counsellor education and counsellor educators, and our common, diverse, and competing interests. The legacy of the market-led reforms in education, and the effects of the ongoing risk of market saturation (Webb, 2000), continue to be felt as educational institutions exercise caution in relationships with each other. Control of curriculum and standards in counsellor education is exercised in competing fashion by a number of stakeholders—professional associations; government-funding agencies and departments; employers; NZQA and CUAP; academic and other educational institutions; counsellor educators; and students.

### **The contemporary environment**

Looking back in order to look forward, we suggest that counsellor education might be described as having grown in a rhizomatic manner,<sup>7</sup> shaped in new directions by changing sociopolitical conditions, and shaping itself in somewhat random fashion when opportunities have opened up or responsibilities become clear. Counsellor educators have taken action to serve a range of professional, academic, and personal interests: their own jobs; the programmes in which they teach; current, former and potential students; employing institutions; counsellor educators as a group; the counselling profession; clients, and communities. Aware that we, as authors, serve this range of interests as we write, we now turn to investigate possible emergences from this account that we have offered, in the light of contemporary concerns. We consider possible actions that counsellor educators might be called upon to take in a third

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7. The metaphor of the rhizome was explored by Deleuze and Guattari (1987): rhizomatic growth is non-linear but spreads in various directions, putting down roots as it goes.

phase if they are both to respond to their responsibilities and to take up opportunities. Our attention is drawn to the following aspects of the contemporary environment, as they are relevant for the future direction of counsellor education. We conclude this article by briefly setting these out, purposefully leaving space for others' dialogic reflections before, in a subsequent article, offering a discussion of possible implications and raising further questions for dialogue.

### *Government policy*

Local experience of the current global economic crisis has seen fiscally driven reviews of government-funded social service provision, including ACC and the Family Court which are significant sources of funding for counselling. Counsellors report a tightening job market that has implications for employment of graduates of our programmes.

- *What responsibilities do counsellor education programmes have when the job market for graduates is difficult?*

The Māori Party's participation in government has seen the implementation of the Whānau Ora programme, a whānau-based approach, inspired by Mason Durie and administered by Te Puni Kōkiri.

- *What contributions is counselling making to educating practitioners who can participate in and contribute to this innovative practice?*

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) that now funds tertiary education has responded to the contracted economy by capping the numbers of students for which tertiary institutions are funded. As well, within the TEC there are current discussions about proposals for a one-year, 180-point master's degree that will follow on from an undergraduate degree.

- *How will cooperation or competition govern counsellor education programmes' responses to this changing environment?*
- *What might we want to advocate for in counsellor education programmes?*

Supported by the TEC, some universities have moved to make teacher education available only as a one-year graduate programme.

- *What implications might this significant change have for counsellor education programmes situated in the same institutions?*

Academic staff in tertiary education institutions now have clear accountability for performance as researchers.<sup>8</sup> Institutional funding and personal career advancement depend on successful performance.

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8. See <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Funding/Fund-finder/Performance-Based-Research-Fund-PBRF/>

- *What might be counsellor educators' responsibilities as research leaders in the counselling profession?*
- *What research in counsellor education might be critical at this time, and who will set the agenda? Who will fund the research and who will the researchers be?*

### *Registration*

Registration is a particular aspect of government policy that has high relevance for counsellor education and potentially for its curriculum. While questions of registration and accreditation have long been debated within our profession (Cornforth, 2006; Everts, 1987; Manthei, 1989, 2008), the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act) and the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 made registration a more relevant and urgent question for counselling to consider, particularly as the HPCA Act has had the unintended effect of excluding counsellors from employment in many health settings or in settings funded by health contracts. HPCA registration would involve a significant shift for counselling in New Zealand from its phase-1 orientation as an education-identified profession to a health-identified one, with implications for counsellor education. Significantly for counsellor education, the curriculum would be determined by a government-appointed board. Questions for counsellor education include:

- *What influence would those with specialist knowledge of counsellor education and the field of counselling have on the constitution of such a board?*
- *How would counsellor educators influence the process of determining the curriculum?*
- *What level of education would a board deem appropriate for professional practice in counselling?*
- *What would counsellor educators want to say about standards of education and practice?*

What other questions might be relevant as the counselling profession awaits the outcome of the forthcoming HPCA review<sup>9</sup> that will determine whether or not it is possible for counselling to apply for regulation on HPCA Act terms, or whether self-regulation audited for the Ministry of Health will be a way forward for counselling, or whether the status quo will continue?

Closely linked to registration is the contemporary place of counselling among the social service, health, education, and psy-professions. The evidence-based practice movement (see Goss & Rose, 2002) has been very successful in attracting both funding

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9. See NZAC Executive Report to Branches, August 2011, at [www.nzac.org.nz](http://www.nzac.org.nz)



and status for those professional groups who practise on its terms. Counselling has long positioned itself otherwise.

- *What leadership responsibilities might counsellor educators have as researchers and theorists to engage with the terms of the evidence-based practice movement?*
- *How should the counsellor education curriculum engage with this movement?*

### *The profession*

An inaugural national counsellor education conference offers an opportunity for counsellor educators to focus on counsellor education as a practice, and a practice integral to the profession of counselling.

- *What might be the common interests about which we might collaborate?*
- *How might we manage the competition that inevitably acts upon us all?*
- *How might we acknowledge and then make the best of our differences, such as differences in active involvement in the profession and its politics; in experience in counsellor education; in what we hold dear as educators; in our understandings of counselling; in the institutions that host our programmes?*
- *How might we reshape relationships between the professional association and counsellor education?*
- *Might our knowledge of counsellor education be put to use more widely in policy development and practice within NZAC in areas such as membership; and if so, what might we do?*

### *The community*

Counsellor education has particular responsibilities that go beyond our students to encompass their communities of affiliation: their communities of origin and identities; those in which they live, and those in which they practise currently and in the future.

- *How is counsellor education responding to Treaty of Waitangi responsibilities, and what might the next steps be?*
- *What other aspects of contemporary life in our communities might be particularly critical for counsellor education to consider at this time?*

### *Thinking globally*

Contemporary global and social change—“the interchange of economies; the movement of people; and climate change” (Cornforth, 2011, p. 255), as well as terrorism, new kinds of fundamentalism, new managerialism, an increasing gap between rich and poor, the end of oil—affects every area of life and therefore these matters are

“counselling concerns and demand ethical attention,” as Cornforth suggested (p. 256).

- *How might counsellor education and its curriculum be shaped for relevance to the lives of diverse communities and clients?*
- *What consideration should contemporary counsellor education give to environmental and ecological ethics?*
- *What are the ethical responsibilities of counsellor educators in response to local and global social change?*

It is not only an ethical responsibility [of counsellor educators] to offer relevant, progressive and future-oriented instruction, it is a moral and humanitarian duty as well. (Brotherton, 1996, p. 84)

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