People’s motive for writing history was not objective curiosity but a desire to influence their contemporaries, to encourage and inspire them, or to hold a mirror up before them.

Freud (1919: 83)

The history of counselling in the workplace is not a clear, logical or easy one to determine. It seems to be a story of widely differing pressures ranging from social, political, economic, institutional/organizational, individual, practitioner and client sources. Some of these pressures may have been conscious, others deeply unconscious. Whatever these pressures may be, they have led to the present position of counselling in the workplace. In Britain, external employee assistance programmes (EAPs) provide counselling services for approximately 2.26 million employees, or 10 percent of the working population in 1137 organizations. The value of this business is £22.53 million (EAPA UK 2001). The true figure for employees with access to counselling services is probably much higher than this. In North America the number of organizations using EAPs and counselling services accounts for a much higher proportion of the national workforce.

The history of counselling at work also runs parallel to the history of ‘work’ – and as counselling in the workplace is explored, work and what work means to clients, organizations and counsellors will be examined throughout this book.
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Perhaps counselling in the workplace has existed as long as there have been relationships where one person serves another person, in a non-familial context – that is, without a family bond. This idea is based on two major factors; first, the existence of communication between two or more people. Where there is some form of communication there exists the possibility for some level of psychological understanding – which in itself can provide the opportunity for an active psychological interest between the two people. Second, the work relationship, however crude or rudimentary, may require the person in the role of employer to have some interest in the employee in order to maintain the existence of the status of employer/employee, and to maintain the service/labour from which the employer benefits as a direct consequence of the relationship.

A simple version of a relationship between an employer and employee is this: one person takes on a role willingly or unwillingly to provide a service for the other person, the ‘other person’ having power or control over the ‘service provider’. This does not mean that counselling takes this form, or that such a relationship naturally determines that ‘counselling’ will follow. However, at some point there is some form of communication between these two people, even if it is done through a third party, such as a charge hand, a manager or a union official, even if the communication does not resemble the subtle and sophisticated communications that we understand counselling to be now. There is nothing new in that, and there are many examples in fiction of relationships between employer and employee. Although the relationship in terms of power and control may not be equal, each party has a mutual interest/disinterest in the survival, health and growth of the other. When this interest is healthy and positive, it will contain ‘mutuality’, that is also an interest in another person – one of the necessary prerequisites for some form of counselling relationship.

Those who have the control and power will at some point take some interest in the welfare of the other, even if it is only to ensure the employee is still able to gratify the desires, needs or appetites of the one in control. Such selfish interests may not seem to be anything like the complex communications and individual interests in work relationships that many people experience today, but actually such communications between the one with power and the one without, are not far removed from many of the work issues that workplace counsellors are presented with every working day.
Employers, even in their most basic form, have for many reasons always needed to have some interest in those that they employ. From primitive, feudal and pre-industrial beginnings, this basic understanding of the relationship between employer/employee has been developed and has undergone many changes, up to our present workplace conditions. In the public sector workplace counselling services are common and access to counselling services is part of the ordinary expectations of employees in much of that sector. The interest that the employer has in a public sector employee may appear to be far more tolerant, benign and sophisticated than a simple interest in maintaining a socioeconomic relationship, but evidence from workplace counsellors counters this assumption: the actual existence of workplace counsellors can be seen to be part of the maintenance of the socioeconomic relationship. These ideas are explored further in the book.

In North America the history of counselling in the workplace appears to be more fully documented than in the UK; perhaps this is because central government in North America has been more actively involved in the last century with the politics of employee care than has central government in Britain. The history of counselling in the workplace in the United Kingdom is less well documented, usually only taking up a couple of pages in the literature (Carroll 1996; Carroll and Walton 1997; Feltham 1997). This suggests that counselling in the workplace has been a gradual evolution, an activity that has grown from practitioners and organizations operating individually, rather than through the coordination of services and practice on a large scale. As I describe in later chapters, this is a reflection of counselling practice – it usually takes place quietly, discreetly and in private. Also some organizations, like many clients who have counselling, may not wish to ‘broadcast’ the news that they are involved in counselling.

As many practitioners know, in Britain there is still some social stigma attached to being a client receiving counselling. This may be an indication of individual resistance and reluctance to engage in a difficult process, but also social defence mechanisms contribute to the stigma of being a client.

The social position of counselling in the United Kingdom is very different from counselling in other parts of the world, especially in North America, and this is partially due to the access and availability of counselling in the workplace. The more employees have access to workplace counselling in a country, the more ‘normal’ it appears to be to the wider population. The more government discusses counselling and provides legislation for the access and provision of
counselling, the more counselling will be perceived as a part of ordinary work life and, consequently, of life outside of work as well.

DEFINITIONS OF THE ‘WORKPLACE’ AND ‘COUNSELLING’

The specific location of the workplace would appear to have changed radically since the Industrial Revolution, and from the early days of welfare work. Defining the ‘workplace’ is an interesting problem, but for the present it is enough to indicate how much the workplace seems to have changed for millions of employees and yet how much the workplace has also regressed to very early forms of capitalism. The cottage industries have some similarity to what is often referred to now in many different work sectors, public and private, as ‘working from home’. Home was the workplace before and during the Industrial Revolution, and now it is again the workplace for some people as technology advances and another source of stress and anxiety develops.

The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) has a long-standing definition of counselling, and is probably the most widely accepted version that exists at this time in Britain:

People become engaged in counselling when a person, occupying regularly or temporarily the role of counsellor offers or agrees explicitly to offer time, attention and respect to another person or persons temporarily in the role of client.

The task of counselling is to give the client an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more resourcefully and towards greater well-being.

(BACP 2002)

Further exploration of the application of this definition of counselling in the environment of the workplace, and application of the BACP code of ethics (2002) follows in Chapter 3.

FREUD’S CONCEPT OF WORK

To better understand the historical development of counselling in the workplace, it is necessary to have a basic understanding, first, of some concepts about work and, second, of counselling. Of the many important contributors to the complicated issues of work, I have chosen two: Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx. Freud, although not a prolific writer on work itself (certainly not compared to Marx),
explains throughout his development of psychoanalysis what it is to be human. This is important to an understanding of what work means to individuals, groups and organizations. Here Freud explains the need for work:

No other technique for the conduct of life attaches the individual so firmly to reality as laying emphasis on work; for his work at least gives him a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community. The possibility it offers of displacing a large amount of libidinal components, whether narcissistic, aggressive or even erotic, on to professional work and on to the human relations connected with it lends it a value by no means second to what it enjoys as something indispensable to the preservation and justification of existence in society. ([1930] 2001: 268)

Here he describes how work becomes important to ordinary human existence – in particular how other complex psychological processes become attached consciously and unconsciously to what is described as ‘work’. Freud was himself a very productive worker, as his first biographer Jones describes: when Freud was busy it ‘meant twelve or even thirteen analytic hours in the day’ (Jones 1962: 451). And after his regular clinical work Freud would still find time to write. Freud also wrote about our natural aversion of work: ‘men [sic] are not spontaneously fond of work’ ([1927] 2001: 186).

The majority of people undertake work through necessity and not through choice. Equally, counselling is a task the majority of people undertake through necessity, and not necessarily by choice, although there are obviously differences between the financial necessity of the first and the psychological necessity of the second.

Freud’s concepts of the importance of work in a psychological context expand some of Marx’s ideas about the alienation of individuals from their sense of self, their relations with other family members and their isolation from larger social groups and communities. Work produces private property at the expense of the individual worker in economic and psychological contexts. It becomes a part of the process of civilization for society, a process that protects society from the natural instincts and urges within all individuals, at the same time as alienating people from themselves and each other. Czander explains the psychoanalytic understanding of work: ‘the motivation to control passion and perhaps the wish to manage or to be managed may be the function of a neurotic condition; that is, nothing more than an attempt to blunt the more “shadowy” wishes and motivations for human relatedness and the fears associated with the creative drive to
master and accomplish’ (1993: 4). Without civilization there would be chaos and destruction, and without work there would be no civilization. Thus, according to Freud’s original theory, when we are at work we unconsciously engage in a process that protects us from ourselves and from the needs and desires of others. What a bizarre and strange world the workplace becomes as these ideas are observed and realized.

From my research into the history of workplace counselling, I believe that organizations decide to develop and provide counselling for the workforce often as a consequence of some disaster, tragedy in the workplace or physical/psychological trauma. In this way organizations are no different from individuals seeking psychotherapy or counselling: often as clients or patients we seek help as a result of some external event as well as internal disturbance. Freud ([1921] 2001) explored group psychology and if his concept of the individual and the group psyche is accepted, we can see clearly the parallel between the psychological search for help in an individual and the psychological search for help in an organization. There are other factors that an organization can use to justify its need to search for help – such as economics – in particular the protection of profits and its market interest/position. These large-scale economic factors can influence individual factors in seeking help: if an employee is suffering from a bereavement and seeks counselling for it, the motivation for doing so may well be to maintain their job – to protect their income and employment. Undoubtedly there are some factors that may be unique to organizations that are not applicable to individuals, but following Freud’s concept of the psychology of groups being similar to the psychology of the individual, then individual psychology helps us to some extent to understand the organization. Organizations are living, experiencing, conscious/unconscious entities that require help just as any individual does. We are all members of organizations, and as Furnham suggests, we ‘are shaped, nurtured, controlled, rewarded and punished by organizations all our lives’ (1999: 1).

MARX’S CONCEPT OF WORK

Some years before Freud developed his theories, Karl Marx developed a sophisticated explanation of the capitalist economic systems that evolved with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Some of Marx’s concepts of a ‘dynamic psychology came too early to find sufficient attention’ (Fromm 1970: 69), and his psychological insight
into human life has perhaps been eclipsed by his economic theories. However, Marx describes the ‘alienation’ (1844: 272) of people from their natural existence through the process of selling their labour to owners of production. Work forces humans to become inhuman as soon as they sell a part of their daily life to someone else for the benefit of the person who buys it. There are four aspects to what Marx describes as ‘alienated labour’ (1844: 272).

Labour alienates:

1 nature from man;
2 man from himself, makes man passive and brings about self-alienation;
3 man from his own body, nature, his intellect and his human essence;
4 man from other men.

As Marx explains: ‘The depreciation of the human world progresses in direct proportion to the increase in the value of the world of things’ (McLellan 1972: 134). This concept of alienation is a psychological theory as well as an economic idea, and finds resonance in some of Freud’s writing about groups. For example, in order for an individual to belong to a group, he or she has to give up some part of himself or herself to the group. This may be done unconsciously or very overtly, such as through an initiation ceremony or ritual. The part of ‘self’ that an individual has to abandon makes for some similarity with some of Marx’s fundamental facts of alienation.

ALCOHOL: PROGENITOR OF WORKPLACE COUNSELLING

There have been many fashions in the history of employers helping employees. Sonnenstuhl and Trice state:

Social betterment, personnel counselling, occupational mental health, and industrial alcoholism. Each of these approaches blends management concerns for productivity with humanitarian values – that is, employers believe that helping employees with their troubles increases productivity.

(1995: 3)

At the end of the nineteenth century, some North American companies were providing a variety of services for their workforces such as housing, financial services, recreational facilities, medical care and education. In Britain, there are still many examples of industrial philanthropies in existence. Some of the textile mills in
West Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Lancashire are evidence of benign individual capitalists. These industrialists financed the building of whole self-contained work communities. Sir Titus Salt developed Saltaire, in West Yorkshire, in 1853. This included homes, a huge mill, a school, a chapel and a park. Robert Owen developed New Lanark in Scotland in 1785, and the employees were provided with homes, free healthcare and ‘education in a school he called the Institute for the Formation of Character’ (Ward 2001: 14). New Lanark and Saltaire provided models for further social provision like that at Bournville, Birmingham and Port Sunlight, Wirral. Perhaps now these buildings and the sentiments that led to their construction appear as ideologically grim as they look grimy and bleak from decades of soot, but the workforces were housed, perhaps fed, and certainly supported by the employers. These few employers took some responsibility for their workforce. From a cynical perspective (or from a simple economic perspective) by keeping the worker fit, the capitalist kept his profit fit. How the worker benefited from this patronage is another question, which I return to in Chapter 6.

In North America this philanthropism progressed to providing welfare workers for the workforce. Welfare workers were able to offer comprehensive services to the workforce and to assist with ‘social betterment’. Sonnenstuhl and Trice refer to the National Civic Foundation that developed such methods to ‘ensure a stable labor force, promote worker loyalty, combat unionism, and prevent strikes’ (1995: 3). However, with the increasing strength of the trade unions and American labour organizations, workers became disillusioned with these services. This disillusion led to violent conflict between the emerging trade unions and the company owners. Consequently managers had to develop quickly and experiment with a wide range of managerial techniques and concepts to maintain production and hold on to the workforce. Sonnenstuhl (1986: 4) states that from 1880 to 1936 ‘social Darwinism, scientific management, social welfarism, and human relations’ were management concepts that were utilized to manipulate and maintain relationships with workforces. Each of these methods had merits, but also had problems. Briefly, social Darwinism introduced the concept of the fittest surviving in the workplace – the fittest being managers and productive workers. This idea was slightly modified but did little to assist the difficulties between workers and managers. Scientific management, or ‘Taylorism’ (named after F.W. Taylors’ (1911) book), suggested that workers are motivated by money – the more discrete the tasks, the easier the work, the more productivity, and the more money
for labor and management. The cause of unsatisfactory performance is either poorly defined tasks or ‘bad’ employees. If poorly defined tasks and rewards cause unsatisfactory performance, management should undertake a scientific study to redefine them more appropriately. If the problem is caused by a bad employee, he or she is fired.

(Sonnenstuhl 1986: 6)

Apparently some of these principles are still to be found in modern management practice. Critics of ‘Taylorism’ suggest that there is nothing scientific about the concept and that it is just another way of justifying management domination of workers (Sonnenstuhl 1986: 6).

The next management trend was social betterment or social welfarism. This was perhaps a simultaneous development rather than a progression from scientific management, and evolved mainly from the paternalistic attitudes of industrialists like Henry Boot, Rowntree and Cadbury. Welfarism developed mainly in Europe, and an example is provided below in the brief history of Bootshelp. One of the main differences between welfarism and scientific management is the environment(s) in which these concepts and practices developed. As Sonnenstuhl (1986: 7) points out, welfarism developed in industries like retail stores and textile mills because the workforces were predominantly women workers, and often geographically isolated – the Saltaire scheme in West Yorkshire was built around the mill. Scientific management developed in urban industries mainly populated by a male workforce. Welfarism is quite a simple principle designed to keep the workforce, and to reduce the need for unionization. Gradually, perceptions of how much the company owners need to provide for employees has changed, and scientific management and welfarism principles have combined in the evolution of personnel administration functions (Sonnenstuhl 1986: 8).

During the 1930s, as the trades union movement became stronger, companies around the world started to drop many of their welfarism programmes and the next managerial fashion was to develop ‘human relations’. The main influence was Elton Mayo, who suggested companies should have their own psychiatric clinics to help workers with their disruptive and abnormal thinking. In other words – mad workers affect profits, so treat the madness in the individual workers using psychiatric interventions and protect the profits. Western Electric helped produce the Hawthorne studies which found that ‘work groups, not management, regulated productivity by
defining performance standards and by using group pressure to prevent rate busting’ (Sonnenstuhl 1986: 10). The ‘Hawthorne effect’ (Sonnenstuhl 1986: 10) was an increase in production created simply by studying the workforce. By listening to and observing the employees at work productivity increased. So the management tried to replicate this by providing a group of employees (not trained counsellors) whose function was to offer an individual, confidential listening service to other employees. No actual changes were implemented as a result of these discussions, but Western Electric believed that this policy kept the unions out of the company for about 20 years. This is the basis of the human relations concept and, as Sonnenstuhl suggests, it still has a managerial following, as seen by the number of organizations that refer to their personnel operations as human relations or human resources departments.

Alcohol, and employees’ relationships with it, was a major pressure that influenced the development of counselling in the workplace in North America, and this coincided with the evolution and development of worldwide capitalism. In Britain, alcohol and the employer’s requirement to have a sober workforce was an influence on the history of counselling in the workplace, but it does not seem to have been the catalyst it was in North America. Perhaps this can be explained by some differences in the nature of North American capitalism and British capitalism.

In North America in the mid-1950s, alcoholism and alcohol abuse in the workplace had become such a major problem for employees and employers that a small number of recovering alcoholics were able, over a period of time, to bring about the evolution of job-based alcohol programmes. They eventually had funding and legislation to help them from central government, but there were many difficulties, rivalries and splits in the ‘social movement’ (Steele 1989: 513) that became the modern Employee Assistance Professional Association (EAPA). The work that individuals did in the mid-1950s with employees may not be what many would call counselling, and there are important distinctions between the employee assistance programme and counselling of employees, which will be examined in Chapter 6. However, without the energy, enthusiasm and anti-alcoholic zeal that many of these early pioneers displayed, perhaps counselling in the workplace would be very different today. It was predominantly the work of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) that inspired the individuals in North America, eventually leading to the formation of the Association of Labor-Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcohol (ALMACA) in 1971. This group was supported by two other large groups, the National Council on
Alcoholism (NCA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). The job-based alcohol programmes in the early 1970s comprised the following elements – ‘a written policy statement, focused on employees with alcohol dependence and emphasized the role of the supervisor in the secondary prevention of alcohol related problems through constructive confrontation’ (Steele and Trice 1995: 398).

These programmes were active and directive. They involved the line managers/supervisors in the treatment of individual workers. From the early 1970s, the number of job-based programmes increased and became more diverse and complex. Employee assistance programmes developed in a different form from the early alcohol systems, as they included self-referral by employees, the use of external agencies for treatment and a ‘broad brush’ approach to the variety of problems that could affect an employee’s performance, such as financial, familial, disciplinary matters and so on (Steele 1989: 521).

Rosemary Clough discovered that there were quite different approaches to workplace alcohol management in Britain and North America. She was a ‘company counsellor’ at Control Data, a computer firm with offices in various parts of Britain. The parent company in Minneapolis had a well-established EAP. The company’s main concerns were employee welfare, alcoholism and the strength of the trade unions at that time. She received training in the US, but learnt that dealing with an employee’s alcohol problem in the US was quite different to how it was dealt with in Britain. In North America, trade unions expected their members to be given all possible help and treatment when alcoholism was recognized, and thus the employee’s job was protected as they received treatment. In Britain, Clough found that management and unions unknowingly tended to do the opposite – they would protect an employee from having their alcoholism identified, which eventually would lead to employees losing their jobs when the problem could no longer be concealed.

WELFARE TO COUNSELLING

Many organizations provided ‘welfare’ for their employees, and gradually some welfare functions evolved into modern personnel management, human resources or counselling services. The first professional welfare worker was Mary Wood, who started her welfare career at Rowntrees in 1896. In June 1913, the Welfare Worker’s Association (WWA) was formed and this represented about 60
welfare workers in British industry, including four workers at the Boots Company. The WWA later became the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM).

The history of welfare provision in several large organizations is useful as a description of the evolution of workplace counselling services.

**The Boots Company**

The growth of services for employees in the Boots Company is a good example of a large number of different pressures and factors that influence creative methods of helping employees and profits simultaneously. This internal counselling service has an interesting pedigree and history, evolving from the benign paternalism of Sir Jesse Boot.

The Boots Company employed a part-time ‘welfare officer’ from 1891 to 1903, Clara Heath, and she was provided with a bicycle in 1893 so that she could visit women employees who were ill or in situations of hardship. At this early stage in the history of the company, the care of employees was strictly demarcated along gender lines – Jesse Boot took responsibility for the ‘welfare’ of all the male managers and employees, and his wife Florence took responsibility for the female employees. Florence’s ‘welfare’ role included serving cups of coffee and hot chocolate to women employees as they arrived for work in the mornings.

In 1903 Clara Heath left the company because she got married – another indicator of the context in which these early services were being developed, a paternalistic, perhaps chauvinistic, rigid class and gender system. The next welfare officer, Eleanor Kelly, took over in 1911, by which time there were over 1000 female employees in the 40 Nottingham factories, and many more in the retail sites. Born in 1884 and brought up in New York and England, she had trained as a social worker, and her first job was as a ‘welfare worker’ for a tin box manufacturer, Hudson Scotts. Here she made a positive contribution to the health and safety of the female employees by introducing basins with hot water, soap and towels in some of the workrooms. The women were working on heavy metal presses, up to their elbows in grease without washrooms or lavatories, and in her first week Eleanor Kelly realized that some of the women had lost fingers and thumbs on the presses. There were no first aid facilities or sick rooms. Florence Boot visited this factory, met Eleanor Kelly and persuaded her to visit the Boots factories and to stay at the family mansion. Here
Jesse Boot encouraged Kelly to move to Nottingham and help with the care of the female employees at Boots. The Boots factories and the tasks of the female workers in the factories were not as dangerous or as foreboding as the work in the tin box manufacturer’s, and so Kelly’s objectives were not as radical. However, she secured some important changes: renovation of the staff canteen and a sick room next to her office which employed a full-time nurse and doctor. Kelly helped implement ‘record cards’ for all female employees, and gradually expanded her role to visiting female employees each afternoon, to help them access other forms of assistance such as the Salvation Army or church help. Sometimes these ‘referrals’ would come from Jesse Boot directly. Kelly required help in her role and so recruited two trained social workers, Agatha Harrison and Miss Kerr, as well as a physical education teacher, Miss Holme. She also sought help from other ‘welfare workers’.

The welfare workers at Boots continued helping the workforce, and their presence in the company brought other innovations, such as social benefits, salary administration and sickness leave. In 1920 when the Retail Staff Department was developed, the manager of this department was given the responsibility for wage claims, workers’ grievances and negotiations with trade unions. In the 1950s the number of welfare officers increased.

The decision to provide workplace counselling seems to have followed two employee suicides that happened in the Boots Company in the early 1980s. The head of personnel at that point decided that some form of counselling was required for employees. This is perhaps the main critical event that encouraged the organization to seek counselling help.

Now the Bootshelp Service employs nine counsellors, with two other self-employed counsellors, across the United Kingdom and Irish Republic. The roles of the current counsellors, recruited from predominantly social work backgrounds complemented by professional formal counselling training, include other functions in the workplace as well as traditional, individual counselling. Currently, the Boots Company offers this counselling service to its 100,000 employees, 19,900 of whom are retired staff. It is an interesting internal service that combines a number of roles for staff and management. In many ways, it features the services found within traditional EAPs – advice, guidance, employment law information and so on, as well as individual counselling. It exists in a predominantly non-union context – although some areas of the business are unionized. It thus provides a function as the employee’s ‘voice’ in some instances, for example, the head of the Bootshelp Service has
attended employment tribunals against the company, representing an employee.

The Post Office

Noreen Tehrani’s account of her experience in the Post Office (1997: 42) provides an excellent example of how a large public sector organization – with up to 200,000 employees – can provide an effective and trustworthy internal counselling service. She also shows how the service had to change to meet the needs and demands of the organization’s business, and the needs and demands of the employees. This is an example of internal ‘political’ pressures within an organization, the needs of welfare workers in the organization and recognition of the appropriate style of assistance that employees actually require. All of these factors contributed to the innovation of the counselling service in the Post Office.

The history of welfare provision in the Post Office runs parallel to the development of welfare services in Britain. After the Second World War, as the government developed schemes and services for the working and non-working population, organizations did not have to provide as much care for the employees and their families as they had done previously. The role of welfare officers in the workplace changed, although, as Tehrani points out, there are still some traditional varieties of welfare services still to be found in Britain. But one of the new problems that welfare officers were expected to help employees with was stress. Definitions of stress are complex and varied; however, in the Post Office, Tehrani states, ‘as a result of the Post Office’s caring culture and the support provided to employees the levels of stress experienced by Post Office employees are generally less than those found in other organisations’ (1997: 44).

The Post Office Welfare Service has a long and successful history, and decided to change its name to Employee Support on its fiftieth anniversary in May 1995. This followed a rigorous exploration and report into the welfare service. One of the main findings about the welfare service was that ‘although the service was valued, it lacked a business focus which was vital to the development of an effective customer–supplier relationship’ (Tehrani 1997: 47). Up until this time measuring effectiveness had been limited to measuring the amount of time taken by a welfare officer to help the employee. Tehrani suggested that this meant the focus of the work from the welfare officer’s perspective was primarily based on time rather than on results or problems solved. Thus, the welfare officers had an
economic interest in maintaining the relationship with the employee. This was unsatisfactory for all concerned. When Tehrani took over in October 1994, it was apparent ‘that in order to help the organisation meet its moral and legal obligations to employees, Welfare had to be a more broadly based and professionally qualified service’ (1997: 47).

The legal and moral obligation an organization has towards its employees raises some interesting and complex questions about principles. Tehrani suggests that there are three types of care that an organization owes to the employees.

First, there is the duty of care that is defined in the legal structures of employment law in Britain. Second, ‘organisational mission and values’ (Tehrani 1997: 49) can be translated to mean that an organization believes it can help reduce mental health problems in the workforce by providing a workplace that does not contribute to employee mental health problems, through clarity about job role and counselling services for employees. Third, ‘individual effectiveness’ (Tehrani 1997: 49) – a concept that makes a philosophical/sociopolitical assumption – is a particular activity that an organization can provide, mainly focused on helping the individual employee maximize their efficiency and thus help the organization maximize its efficiency. A variety of services may be provided to assist employees achieve this, such as information, advice, problem identification and counselling.

However, as Tehrani developed her role in the Post Office she realized that regarding the

changing needs of the organization for support in the psychosocial area of employee well-being, there had to be a change in the emphasis of the welfare service from one which had its main focus on social issues to one which also embraced psychological aspects of employee well-being.

(1997: 49)

It was apparent that another system was required to meet the increase in psychological issues that were being recognized by the Employee Support advisors, the management and the organization. Tehrani believed that a psychological service was required that would have to meet the needs of the organization and not the other way around. She observed that at that time many organizations had counselling services, but they appeared to be minor modifications of private practice counselling models. Tehrani wanted to establish a counselling service that met the various needs of the organization and would reflect the organizational setting, rather than set up
another in-house private counselling practice. My understanding is that Tehrani needed to develop a system that was not a service that perpetuated itself and its own socioeconomic needs. There are still plenty of services such as those she observed. The employees are undoubtedly assisted by some of these counselling provisions, but the main reason for the existence of some of these services is for the profit of the counsellors involved, not that of the organization funding the counselling service.

Tehrani wanted a counselling system that fitted the organization, not an organization that fitted a private practice counselling system. So she developed First Line Counselling (1997: 52), which has a very clearly defined set of objectives, values and structures. There is a limit of four sessions per employee. Tehrani outlines the stages that are included in this solution-focused method of working. The model is viewed by Tehrani as a product, and as such it can be measured, evaluated and improved. Tehrani sums up her approach and her attempt to rationalize an internal workplace counselling service: ‘the client is always the organisation’ (unpublished interview, 2001).

The evolution of Employee Support into First Line Counselling followed a general social trend towards the need for psychological help for employees from professionals at work, but it also developed from the ‘business values’ brought in by Tehrani. This is an interesting combination that sometimes worries more traditional counselling practitioners. Some of the pioneers referred to later in this chapter have been in key positions in the history of counselling in the workplace, and have combined other values with traditional counselling practice.

Other organizations have shown that they believe very strongly in the benefits of a counselling service. The reasons for developing such services have some common factors. The following examples of contemporary workplace counselling services demonstrate these, and highlight several other relevant factors in the history of counselling in the workplace.

**Northamptonshire Constabulary**

The national critical event that spurred on the development of a staff counselling service in the Northamptonshire police force was the Bradford fire in 1984. Prior to it, the force had offered support mainly to police pensioners and to relatives of officers who died on duty. This was done through the medical officer and the Police Federation. The Federation has a long history of advice and assistance in the police
services around the country. Following the fire, the Northamptonshire force experimented with a peer counselling system and a separate employee assistance programme, both of which have been replaced by an internal system that provides a holistic approach to employee care and is managed by Elizabeth Grayson, in the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Department. Grayson, a nurse who was also a trained counsellor, joined the welfare team in 1988. Recognizing the counselling needs of the workforce, she quickly recruited more trained counsellors to cope with the workload. Prior to her arrival, the counselling had been provided by an external counselling organization.

The success of this service was rewarded by an increase in the budget provision. This police force has an employee population of approximately 1400. The service is confidential and now offers brief therapeutic interventions (up to six counselling sessions), the services of eight chaplains and a range of other complementary health specialists, taking a holistic approach to employee well-being.

In the early 1990s two other critical events occurred which influenced the provision of services for the Northamptonshire force employees: the Lockerbie disaster – which directly affected the Lothian Borders police force – and two incidents involving explosives in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. These incidents led to the Northamptonshire force adopting a defusing and debriefing policy and practice, to help employees cope with a variety of critical incidents. Now internal force trainers have used a defusing programme with a number of officers to help other employees to deal with the trauma and crises that may occur in their daily duties. The history of this service is quite typical of many public sector organizations – various models and methods are adopted and tried out for a period of time, often to begin with as a reaction to events, but becoming proactive as the individuals employed in welfare and counselling influence the establishment and expansion of the service.

**Crewcare**

Another typical example of the evolution of an internal counselling system for employees is British Airway’s (BA) Crewcare. It is worth noting the development of Crewcare, as it seems to contain most of the elements required for the establishment of an internal counseling system – an initial human crisis, an awareness of contemporary therapeutic practices and human resources practice, and a willingness
within the leadership of the organization to assist the workforce and working community.

In 1983 the BA Human Resources Director, Nick Georgeoduous, was aware of a lack of support for the cabin crew community in BA. The realization of this seems to have followed the suicides of two crew members. At that time the cabin crew community was much smaller than it is today. In 1985, Gerard Egan was invited by the Human Resources Director to train a core group of counsellors. Human resources ran a training programme for cabin crew members for about seven years.

There followed financial changes within the organization, and the management of the counselling service changed so that three cabin crew jointly managed the service for a period of time. Later, a stewardess became manager of the service, and two cabin crew were seconded to manage and supervise the counselling team. This service was now called Crewcare and the sole focus was to provide counselling for cabin crew. After extensive research by BA, which included a close look at Work Family Directions in Boston, USA, the counselling provision was put out to tender and Independent Counselling and Advisory Services (ICAS) won the contract for the whole BA workforce.

Crewcare still thrives and still has as its main focus the provision of effective and immediate crisis counselling sessions to any of the 15,000 cabin crew members. The cabin crew are also able to access counselling, advice and information from ICAS if they wish to use this rather than Crewcare. The crisis counselling sessions at present take the form of a single session with a trained cabin crew counsellor. The Egan model (2002) is the main theoretical model that is used to train cabin crew, and a rigorous training programme is undertaken by cabin crew who apply to join the service. In a recent recruitment process, Crewcare had 300 applications from the cabin community to join. Ninety were chosen to attend a two-day selection process of which 13 were recruited to learn the Egan model.

The main success of this service is the integration of the cabin crew into crisis counsellor role within this unique community. Feedback from service users indicates a preference for cabin crew to talk to other cabin crew. A cabin crew ‘client’ has a list of counsellors to choose from, knowing that all on the list are from the cabin crew community.

Other services that Crewcare offers include a Working Parents Group, that provides seminars for cabin crew thinking of starting a family or returning to work after having children. This is a popular part of their service with substantial uptake. Critical Incident Support
for cabin crew is also provided, started after a BA aircraft flew into a flock of geese, causing an engine fire that traumatized some of the crew. Research among other airlines into handling of critical incidents led BA to adopt the Mitchell De-Briefing model, and a tender was put out for a provider. Crewcare writes to any cabin crew involved in a critical incident and offers information on how they can access help, if required.

**PIONEERS OF WORKPLACE COUNSELLING**

A few individuals stand out as making a singular contribution to development of workplace counselling. These are people who have shaped and developed their own interests in counselling applications to organizational problems, and have consciously and unconsciously determined the development of workplace counselling in the world. Quietly influential and inspirational for many counsellors, managers, clients and employees/employers, these individuals are major forces in the evolution of workplace counselling. Their ideas have helped many counsellors establish their practice within the workplace setting. They have applied a crucial blend of clinical theory and practice with business acumen and commercial awareness. Since it is also these individuals’ personalities, anxieties and personal histories that have led them to develop their work and ideas, I include a brief outline of their stories, as a parallel to the history and development of counselling in the workplace.

*Michael Reddy*

Ask people in the counselling and EAP world who they consider to be a leading figure in the development of counselling in the workplace in the UK, and Michael Reddy’s name is always mentioned. Born in Preston, Lancashire, Reddy realized in his school life that he had an ability to make people laugh, and his sense of performance stayed with him when he studied in a Jesuit seminary and later became a teacher. An interest in psychology took Reddy to the United States where, over six years, he experienced a wide range of therapeutic settings and practices: drop-in centres, student counselling, marriage counselling, physical rehabilitation, alcohol and drug clinics and an intern year in an acute psychiatric unit. Alongside these applications of therapy he explored a variety of other
techniques such as bioenergetics, psychodrama, transactional analysis, gestalt and encounter groups. He recognized that he needed to have a sound understanding of one particular form of therapy, and for him this was transactional analysis (TA). His tutor had studied with Fritz Perls as well as Eric Berne, so his teaching was an amalgamation of these two important influences.

After a period of time in South Africa, where Reddy was asked to deliver some counselling training, he returned to Europe and took his final exams in TA. He went on to play a hugely influential role ‘in the establishment of TA in the rest of Europe and in the formation of the European Association for Transactional Analysis (EATA)’ (Parlett and Page 1990: 200).

A managing director of a brewing company asked him to run a TA course and this turned into a ten-year project, including training courses such as people management, negotiating skills, interpersonal skills and finally counselling skills, for the whole range of the workforce: sales, line managers, human resources, welfare and occupational health.

Reddy gathered together a small team of people with a variety of skills to meet some of these demands and formed a small business: Independent Counselling and Advisory Services (ICAS). Today this company is much bigger than he ever intended it to be, although now he has no operational responsibilities in it. He takes pride in the beliefs of ICAS, which remain simple and effective: ‘help for the individual, projected and magnified on the screen of the whole organisation’. He handles employees with whom organizations do not know how to work, as he can relate to the contextual workplace and hierarchy issues to do this. This relates back to his earlier work with individuals, although now he is working with individuals who have a large impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations.

Gerard Egan

Egan is well known among counsellors for the ‘Three Stage Model’ he introduced in his major work The Skilled Helper (2002). He deserves to be included as a pioneer of counselling at work, not only because of his accessible theoretical contribution but because of his application of his theories to the tasks of management.

I recall his description of his approach to a consultancy project he had taken on for a large American retailer. He entered one of the company stores – he walked in just like any other customer would,
and started casually to observe what was happening in that store: the way staff spoke to customers and the way that staff spoke to each other. From these preliminary observations he was able to build a picture of what it was like to shop at that store, and he gained some idea of what it might be like to work there. This simple idea about casual observation of people at work in their work environment and talking their work language is a crucial part of understanding the significant contextual structures of a particular workplace. Without an understanding of what employees do and how employees go about their tasks the counsellor in the workplace will limit their effectiveness. Egan’s observations raise an important issue for workplace counsellors – how well do they know the organization and the everyday culture that the employees, and their clients, inhabit?

Egan’s book, *The Skilled Helper* (2002), reputedly the world’s most widely used counselling training text, was first published in 1975 and is now in its seventh edition. It provides a complete practical working model for helping individuals in a one-to-one scenario, which can be translated easily and applied to helping small and large groups. The ‘Three Stage Model’ is a description of a process that can be adapted and integrated with many theoretical principles. The first stage is about the client’s story – this could be compared to psychodynamic notions of the unconscious, and the material of the psyche that lies underneath all thoughts, emotions and actions. From a cognitive-behavioural perspective, the model offers a simple frame for rational and logical exploration of a problem. From a humanistic perspective the model offers a simple structure to explore the here and now, and to facilitate movement led by the client. Some of his later work such as *Adding Value* (1993) is an extension of the Three Stage Model into a systematic model for developing management and leadership in organizations. It includes many examples of his managerial consultancy experiences: ‘all bases have to covered’ means attending to every eventuality and detail. Every possible turn an organization could take needs to be considered. An effective consultant entering an organization uses similar methods and processes to a counsellor, with a keen interest in the detail of a client’s words and movements. The organization is a living, breathing conscious and unconscious entity and deserves this attention from a managerial consultant or workplace counsellor.

Born in 1930 to Irish immigrant parents in Chicago and educated at a Jesuit seminary, Egan started out as a philosophy teacher, until he became more interested in psychology and started an MA programme in clinical psychology. He was ordained as a priest in 1965, and was soon asked to teach psychology in the seminary. He
undertook his doctorate in clinical psychology at Loyola University, Chicago, and was asked to stay on and develop an MA programme in counselling psychology, which he did for about 12 years.

He became convinced that many individuals have problems in everyday living because of their social settings rather than because of tormented internal psychic struggles. His first writing was about the impact that larger social settings and social structures, like culture, have upon individuals. His early interest in the social context has remained a theme throughout his work, and he spends much of his time as ‘counsel to management’, helping organizations to develop more humane and professional management practices ‘to produce a management system that is both productive and humane’ (Egan 2001). He sees himself as the provider of what he calls ‘the four C’s: consultant, coach, counsellor and confidante for managers’.

**Michael Carroll**

Michael Carroll, born in Belfast in 1945, started his professional career, similarly, as a priest. He became interested in counselling and completed the Egan programme at Loyola University, Chicago, obtaining his MA in counselling psychology. On his return to the United Kingdom he spent the next seven years establishing training programmes for social workers and psychologists in counselling, and helped to develop a counselling centre in Glasgow, later moving to London and to a lectureship in counselling at the Roehampton Institute, where he stayed for ten years.

Carroll became interested in working in organizations during his time at Roehampton – they had a contract with the Metropolitan Police Force to train and supervise their welfare officers. As a result of this he was asked to write and deliver the first diploma in counselling at work. Carroll’s publications cover a variety of counselling and organizational issues, such as *The Handbook of Counselling in Organizations* (Carroll and Walton 1997) and *Workplace Counselling* (1996). Since leaving Roehampton he has continued to specialize in management and organizational consultancy, and has been involved in an executive mentoring programme for Premier Prisons.

Reddy and Egan are the grandfathers of contemporary workplace counselling. Carroll has written two important texts on workplace counselling, developing organizational roles for counsellors and taking counselling supervision into the workplace.

Two organizations also require recognition for the work that their members have done in establishing counselling in the workplace.
over the last 20 years – the Association for Counselling at Work (ACW) and the Employee Assistance Professionals Association UK (EAPA UK).

**The Association for Counselling at Work**

This organization evolved from two small collections of work-based counsellors joining together, under the umbrella of one of the divisions of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). BACP has several divisions to cater for the different needs and requirements of counsellors operating in different contexts and settings, for example, APSCC for pastoral and spiritual care, AUCC for university and college counsellors, and a faculty for counsellors working in primary health care settings. Lynn Macwhinnie and Shirley Cully were two of the many workplace professionals involved in the early development of the ACW. In 1977, the Centre for Professional Employment Counselling (CEPEC) was established and this was primarily concerned with training in work counselling skills and counselling that focused on ‘career planning, behavioural difficulties, stress, personal problems and other situations affecting performance at work’ (CEPEC 1985). Other areas of CEPEC services included helping redundant executives find employment, assisting graduates select careers, and providing redeployment and retirement information.

In 1984, CEPEC launched CEPEC Managers Counselling Association (CMCA) as a response to the growing demand for counselling skills training from managers. In 1985, CMCA had over 270 members spread throughout the United Kingdom and the following year held a second event with the Counselling At Work Division (CAWD) of the BAC. The CMCA was ‘essentially for Managers using counselling skills’ (CMCA 1987). The CMCA and CAWD joined together to form the ACW under the chair of Judith Baron.

Today, the ACW is looking forward to the expansion of workplace counselling. Although perceived predominantly as ‘a counsellors’ club’ by non-counsellors, the ACW has a mixed professional membership. The speakers attending their annual conferences reflect the membership; the speakers at the 1999 ACW conference included Michael Palin (the writer and actor), the director of personnel at Boots, directors from two other large private companies, a senior university lecturer and the chair of the New Opportunities Fund.

One of the exciting possibilities for the future expansion of the ACW is the prospect of combining resources with the EAPA
UK. This could lead to joint workplace counselling training projects, accreditation and mutual exchanging of resources and interests.

**The Employee Assistance Professional Association UK (EAPA UK)**

At the time of writing, the EAPA UK is a small organization that exists as a branch of the North American Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA). In North America, EAPA is a large, successful and well-established organization that has recognition and funding from a large and varied community of support. It experienced some problems regarding membership in 2002 when a large trade union withdrew its activists. However, in North America, the size of the EAP market demands a regulated professional workforce and EAP workers have an accreditation process, which is one of its main assets and differences to EAPs in the United Kingdom. This is the Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP) credential, administered by the Employee Assistance Certification Commission (EACC). To take the CEAP exam an EAP worker has options for eligibility that include 3000 hours of work experience in an EAP setting, 60 professional development hours, a graduate degree in an EAP-related subject and 24 hours of CEAP supervision over six months. The EAP worker has to pay for this process and specific subjects have to be studied and completed. The United Kingdom-based EAPs have very professional EAP workers, but at present only a handful of EAP workers are CEAPs in the UK. In Eire, where there has been an expanding EAP growth, a bold effort to introduce CEAPs has been led by Maurice Quinlan and his training organization.

Most of the EAP workers in the United Kingdom are accredited counsellors and chose this as their primary qualification rather than a CEAP credential. The EAPA UK is trying to establish CEAP as a worthwhile accreditation for British counsellors and EAP workers, but this is a problem as EAPA UK has a small membership and is perceived as ‘a providers’ club’. Some counsellors refer to the EAPA UK as a trades association that has no interest in counselling and is ineffective because of the fierce economic competition between rival EAPs. The EAPA UK has a different perspective on workplace counselling, as its members are largely drawn from domestic and UK-based EAPs. The EAPA UK is interested in the broad dynamics of organizations, and membership comprises a variety of organizational professionals as well as counsellors.

The EAPA UK produced standards and guidelines documents in 1998, which are currently being updated. These standards have been
crucial in defining EAP structures and operations in the United Kingdom. Without these guidelines, there would be very little information to purchasers and providers about what to expect and deliver as an EAP in the United Kingdom. The EAPA UK is looking forward to the growth of workplace counselling for providers and purchasers alike. The differences between the values, positions and perspectives of the ACW and EAPA UK are important, but do not have to prevent cooperation and growth. Both sets of values are essential to workplace counsellors as they reflect the struggles, conflicts and contradictory demands that are faced by those working as counsellors or EAP workers in organizations every day.

CONCLUSION

Tracing the history of workplace counselling is not easy, since it is not well documented. However, reflecting upon individuals such as Freud, Reddy, Jesse Boot, Egan, the Crewcare counsellors, and the recovering alcoholics roaming North America to help fellow employees, is refreshing. It is inspiring and invigorating to imagine the struggles and determination of these people as they doggedly stuck to their ideas and beliefs. Some of the results of their labours are what we know as workplace counselling today.

But what is contemporary workplace counselling? I describe this in more detail in Chapter 2.