

The TLC Communicator

Hello and welcome to the first TLC newsletter for 2011. I look forward to receiving your feedback about the subject matter.

Getting it right when you're with someone who's grieving

With all the tragic events that have been happening in Australia over the past few weeks it is hard to find someone who has not directly or indirectly been affected by them. So I thought I'd put together a newsletter offering guidance for those who have friends or family grieving at the moment.

The most common reaction for people who are supporting others who are in grief is to ignore the problem & hope we don't upset them any more than they already. We do this because we're afraid talking about it will bring them to their emotional knees & to tears again. We don't want to remind them of what they've lost or gone through, so we don't say anything at all. We also don't want to be reminded of any losses we have not dealt with or upset ourselves either. It's not safe.

Well this is actually the worst thing you can do.

What is needed is a safe place for them to talk about what's happened to them, what they've lost and what they are going through. With the talking & retelling of stories, including what happened, how they felt at the time, what they've lost, what they think their life will now be like & everything in between, comes the movement through the process of mourning & with movement will come acceptance.

Talking about the loss is a cathartic process, one most of us need to go through. Without it we can become "stuck" in our grief & when another loss comes our way we cope with it less & less, finally ending up feeling like we're going crazy because the goldfish just died.

Grief is a very personal thing & no 2 people will grieve or feel the same, even twins mourn differently. What we need to do is offer a supportive and secure place for them to go through what they must go through without our judgement or criticism and in their own time, how ever long that may take.

Counselling is a place to do this story telling, reminiscing in a safe, supportive and qualified environment. Usually if the person is not stuck in their grief only a few sessions are required to normalise what is happening to them.

If, after 9-12 months, the bereaved has still not "moving on" then this is another time when counselling can help. It may take more time because of the extent of the mourning, but it is not realistic to believe they will get to a point where they can start to see the woods for the trees without some sort of professional support and guidance.

The goal of counselling is to help people finish the process associated with grieving.

If you know anyone who is suffering emotionally from the floods then a group of counsellors I am associated with are offering free Skype or phone counselling to all flood survivors around Australia. The website is www.collectivesupport.com.au.

Remember it is not necessarily now that they need professional emotional support, it may be in the weeks and months to come when all the volunteers, friends and families have gone back to their own lives & they are left to continue on their own.

The quote I would like to leave you with today is :-

Trust your instincts – doubt means don't

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