

Example Club Pastoral Care Debrief

As given by Bruce Claridge to the Lalbert Football Club (Mallee Eagles) following the tragic death of one of their players during their Summer Training Camp. Adapt to your own use.

Introduction

SCA and I extend our sincere condolences to (INSERT FAMILY HERE)

We also extend our deepest sympathy to the club, its players and officials and associated club members.

Background to Player (Deceased)

From local sensitive research speak here about the deceased

- Personality
- Character
- Talents

Personal gleanings from Family, friends and fellow club members

Grief Debrief

Please remember that grief is different for different people and many experience the so called observed stages of healthy grief, others don't.

Some of the things you may be experiencing are as follows but please remember that this is not meant to be clinical or prescriptive:

SHOCK (Denial) - Numbness or a sense of this being very surreal. This seems to be God's way of initially protecting us from tragic news.

ANGER - Often directed at God or at the unfairness of life. It is important for these feelings to be expressed.

BARGAINING - These are the "What if" questions. This is often associated with unjustified guilt feelings. It is important to work through this stage to allay those feelings.

DEPRESSION - Please give yourself permission to feel the very real pain of grief. Sadness is normal as is crying. We are all different but these expressions of grief are very normal. Here we need to heal in community. Talk to one another and especially reminisce about the good times as well as the not so good. Here we need to be real and authentic. Allowing ourselves to express our grief through tears, words, hugs and other expressions in community help us pass through this stage. We also need to be alert to others who may get stuck in this stage and feel unable to move on. In extreme circumstances professional help may be needed.

RESOLUTION (Acceptance) - Accepting the reality of the loss. Adapting to what has now become the "new normal". Re-investing into life while still recognizing that the wound is still healing and the pain is still evident.

Repressed Grief

For those in the club busy looking after others during a time of community grief there may be "grief on hold" or repressed grief. They may feel that they have passed through the stages of

grief with the rest of the community but actually it is simply repressed because they have not allowed themselves to express their personal grief because they have been so concerned about everyone else.

In the future “triggers” may send them into deep grief again as they now are free of the immediate responsibilities of caring for everyone else. This is the time the leaders need others around them.

What are some of the many normal grieving responses that we may experience?

- **PHYSICAL:** Fatigue, Shortness of breath, Throat tightness, Light headedness.
- **EMOTIONAL:** Sadness, anger, irritability, panic, anxiety, numbness.
- **BEHAVIOURAL:** Forgetfulness, Aimlessness.
- **SOCIAL:** Dependence, Isolation, lack of interest in daily activities.
- **SPIRITUAL:** A sense of feeling betrayed or let down by God, Questioning long held values, doubts about faith.

Some ‘to do’s’ in Community

- Express your feelings by talking about your loss and pain.
- Look after yourself especially in the consumption of alcohol and caffeine and make sure that you eat well. Do these things so you can be in a healthy place to look after others.
- Walk the journey together always being alert to where others are on their journey through grief.
- Continually remind yourself that it’s normal to have feelings of guilt and anger and to live with the tension of unanswered questions.
- Listen to others, learn what the loss meant for them, ask open ended questions that draw a response, Be aware of others people may talk to within or outside the club if they need to. Be aware if professional help is needed.

Conclusion

Be patient and allow both yourself and your club community plenty of time to work through your grief. Work together as a unified club to walk through this time of grief together. Determine to do something throughout the upcoming season to honour the memory of the one no longer with us.

Practical time in Groups to begin the process together.

Designate one facilitator per group who is capable of leading the grief sharing process. Someone who can pose questions like: On a scale of 1-10, how are you coping? Or ‘What are your fondest or most humorous memories of?’

Allow 10-15 minutes for each group and then encourage everyone to remain around for refreshments, normal training or whatever is appropriate for your situation. Make sure you don’t rush off but remain around to talk with club members and particularly the main stakeholders. It is good to make available the names of people both professional and lay who have made themselves available to spend time with club members if they so desire. These are usually people outside the club who have made themselves available. This should be arranged prior to the debrief.