



Creating healing opportunities and promoting wholeness of those who have experienced painful or traumatic events

Spring Newsletter

Issue 3

Spring 2011

The Beauty That Sleeps - Anxiety and Trauma (excerpt)

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*This book is a follow-up to and development of *The Sky before the Storm*.*

Introduction (Page 2)

You may be wondering why we are talking about anxiety when, after your trauma, you feel depressed most of the time. If anything, you would expect to hear more about terror!

However, as you know, you become so used to your state of terror that you hardly notice it – but you **do** notice the feeling of depression.

Still, it's important to know that you are dealing with a special kind of anxiety, one associated with **MEMORY**. It is your memory of shocking events that can lead to panic attacks. The latter may not be as bad as phobias, but are still quite troubling. As you will see in our book, what troubles you is your **memory** of having been:

- * **alone** and
- * **helpless**

when life as you knew it suddenly came to an end. When put together, these two states represent the opposite of identity. However, of the two, **being HELPLESS is the more relevant**. This is because of its association with anxiety.

Given the links between **trauma, memory, being helpless and anxiety**, it follows that if others try to help you, they make you feel more helpless. The more others help you, the worse you become!

What you **do** is help others and, by doing so, help yourself. Dealing with the after-effects of trauma is all about **EMPOWERMENT**, not 'getting help'. It is about taking control of the world around you so as to feel safe once again.

It follows that you would be wise to take control of this book when reading it. There's nothing scary in it. Still, it might trigger a memory in you. If so, look at the pictures or put the book aside. Only read it when calm. But, as we hope to show, the choice is always yours!

A PDF version of this publication is now available.

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.

Proverb

The Steps To Healing Programme

The Steps to Healing Programme is a self-help group healing programme for people who have suffered from trauma. Participants share their experiences in a small, confidential and supportive setting, with people who have also suffered traumatic experiences.

Facilitators of the programme have also been through the Steps to Healing Programme, this helps to create greater trust and understanding between facilitators and participants. Only those who have personal experience of trauma may facilitate and they too communicate their stories with the group.

Each programme comprises of up to 6 participants with 2-3 facilitators. The focus is on sharing the

experience of trauma within the group, telling the trauma and life stories and creating artwork as part of the healing process. This format is designed to show the participant their trauma story in the context of their life as a whole. This allows them to see that the trauma which they have suffered was an event in their life and does not define their life. The disproportionate impact upon the person's emotions is recognised - participants are encouraged to recognise the significance of the event. However, participants report that this structure enables them to see that life was good before their trauma occurred and that there is no reason why life should not be good again. Participants can visualise the trauma as having a start and end point. It has been reported that this is a big factor in helping people to "move on".

Feedback from recent participants:

"It gives the opportunity, in a safe environment, to revisit an impacting incident and with the help of others, to move towards closure and a better future"

The Programme provides "time out from your busy life just for you. Time to focus on your internal journey"

"The Programme helped me let go of a lot of fear and anxiety associated with a traumatic event in my life and allowed me to listen and support others"

"A release and liberation through respect, listening, sharing and healing"

Upcoming Steps to Healing Programme Dates

Steps To Healing Residential

Drumalis, Larne

June 2011

This residential will take place from Friday, 24 June 2011, until Sunday afternoon.

Steps To Healing Residential

Corrymeela, Ballycastle

September 2011

This residential will take place from Friday, 16 September 2011, until Sunday afternoon.

For further information about our programmes please contact the office.

The Wider Circle Residential in Drumalis - update

During the weekend of 25–27 March The Wider Circle held its second Steps to Healing Residential in Drumalis Retreat Centre, a peaceful and picturesque location for this weekend of healing. Evaluations of the residential have again highlighted the positive effects the Steps to Healing Programme has on participants.

A sample of feedback follows;

'I was so surprised by how powerful sharing

stories and producing the artwork was, and I feel I've got a sense of closure.'

'It certainly took me to a different point in life, very insightful and deep.'

'Enjoyable, amazing and powerful.'



Springtime enjoyment

Some tips for enjoyment of the springtime:

- * Visit parks and forests (contact your local Council for activities and event information)
- * Walk barefoot on the grass and let nature caress your feet
- * Enjoy cloudspotting. This is a great website for tips: <http://cloudappreciationsociety.org>
- * Plant flowers, fruit and vegetables. Use window boxes if you have a small garden. The results of this will be enjoyed until the winter.

Good News!

We are delighted to announce the arrival of Matilda Boyd, daughter of Gillian and Paddy and baby sister for Toby. We wish them all the best. From her colleagues, Management Committee, members and friends.



Trauma and Spirituality: International Conference

Dugald McCullough (The Wider Circle Chair)

Some delegates from The Wider Circle recently attended a conference hosted by Journey Towards Healing, Trauma and Spirituality: An International Dialogue. The conference brought together two groups of people – those involved in helping people who have experienced trauma, and, people for whom faith and spirituality are important in their lives. Of course these are not mutually exclusive groups, but the overall aim of the conference was to look at developing a holistic approach to understanding and moving beyond trauma that would include a recognition of the underlying spiritual dimension of human experience. The conference included a most diverse and eclectic mix of ideas and experiences, and those who attended from The Wider Circle were reassured that the work that is done in The Wider Circle sits very well within a holistic approach to assisting people with the process of healing from trauma.

Publications by The Wider Circle

The Sky Before The Storm, 2001. This book explains, in very simple terms, what trauma is and how to cope with it.

The Beauty That Sleeps, 2003. This book explores what you need to know about anxiety and trauma.

Jimmy and the Island of Magic, 2008. This book is a children's story which is designed to help children who have been traumatized in a safe way and includes a set of guideline notes for parents, teachers and others involved in child welfare.

Please contact the office for copies of any of these publications

Recent Feedback on Publications

'The Sky before the Storm is an integral part of my work with people who have suffered trauma, it is a valuable part of their healing process'

'Reading The Sky before the Storm has helped me to feel normal again'

'I saw the book in my doctor's surgery and asked for my own copy because I can see this really helping my husband who has been through a lot in recent years'

The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses.

Hanna Rion

THE WIDER CIRCLE

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Spring Public Holidays

22 April 2011: Good Friday
25 April 2011: Easter Monday
29 April 2011: Royal Wedding
02 May 2011: May Bank Holiday
30 May 2011: Spring Bank Holiday

www.widercircle.org

The Wider Circle is funded by The Northern Ireland Community Relations Council and voluntary donations.

The Wider Circle is a company limited by guarantee (No 39785) and has Charitable tax status (XR39862).

The Wider Circle is a cross-community, voluntary organisation, a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. The aim of the charity is to help and support those who have been traumatised as a result of community or other violence, abuse or any other action.

The Wider Circle facilitates a process of self-healing in the form of group therapy programmes which restore a sense of hope in the lives of people who are experiencing memories of a shocking event which has left them with feelings of isolation, alienation, and pain.

The Wider Circle also publishes books and other literature designed to help sufferers to better cope with their problems as well as helping those who come into contact with them, to better understand what it is like to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Management Committee

Dugald McCullough, Chairperson
Les Bedell, Secretary
Catherine McGroggan, Co-Treasurer
Maeve Mills, Co-Treasurer
Michelle Boyle
Frank Holmes

Staff

Terry Deehan, Temporary Development Manager
Nicole Atkinson, Administrator

Getting involved

The Wider Circle welcomes your involvement.

We are currently recruiting **Committee Members** and we are seeking people with the time, skills and expertise to help us grow even further.

If you are interested in being part of The Wider Circle or wish to volunteer please contact us.

Fundraising Effort!

A group from The Wider Circle will abseil down the Europa Hotel Belfast in September of this year. If you would like to get involved or wish to sponsor our effort please contact the office. The Wider Circle's work is greatly enhanced by donations and sponsorship. Thank-you.

Membership / Donation Form

I would like to become a member of The Wider Circle (tick box)
I would like to make a donation to The Wider Circle (tick box)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Contact Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Comments: _____

Membership is free and by signing up we will keep you up to date with our events and activities.

I would like to donate £ _____ to The Wider Circle

I would like this donation to be treated as a gift aid donation (please tick this box if you pay income tax or capital gains tax and the charity will receive 25% in addition to your donation from Govt sources) (tick box)