

# COUNSELLING ... who needs it?!!

Trauma Services Injury Conference  
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*"We used to watch TV and think people were such "wusses" if they needed help from Victim Support or counsellors after an accident or something. Now I can understand why ... this experience has made me a lot more sympathetic to other people's tragedies. I believe if I hadn't come to you week after week I would have just gone to bed and stayed there."*

*Kathie aged 48*



## References

- Malicoat, Trey. (2001), Notes from "*The Shattering Effects of Trauma*". Partially adapted from the work of Dr Marlene Young, National Organisation of Victim Assistance, USA.
- Torpie, K. (2005). *Losing face: A memoir of lost identity and self-discovery*. New Zealand: Harper Collins Publishers Limited.
- Weingarten, K. (2003). *Common Shock: witnessing violence every day*. New York: Penguin Group, Inc.

# Counselling - what is it?

The formation of a special professional relationship of trust and openness in order to assist a person ...

- deal with painful emotional issues
- increase their understanding of themselves & their relationships with others;
- develop more satisfying and resourceful ways of living and/or bring about a change in their behaviour.



# Counselling ... (cont.)

- “Being a “compassionate witness” to someone’s experience of a traumatic event.”

**Kaethe Weingarten, 2005**

# Trauma

Trauma is a sensorial blow to the human brain that evokes a physical and emotional reaction for the sake of human adaptation to threat, fear, hopelessness, helplessness and terror. Trauma is an acute or chronic aberration to safe daily routine and function.

(Trey Malicoat, 2001)

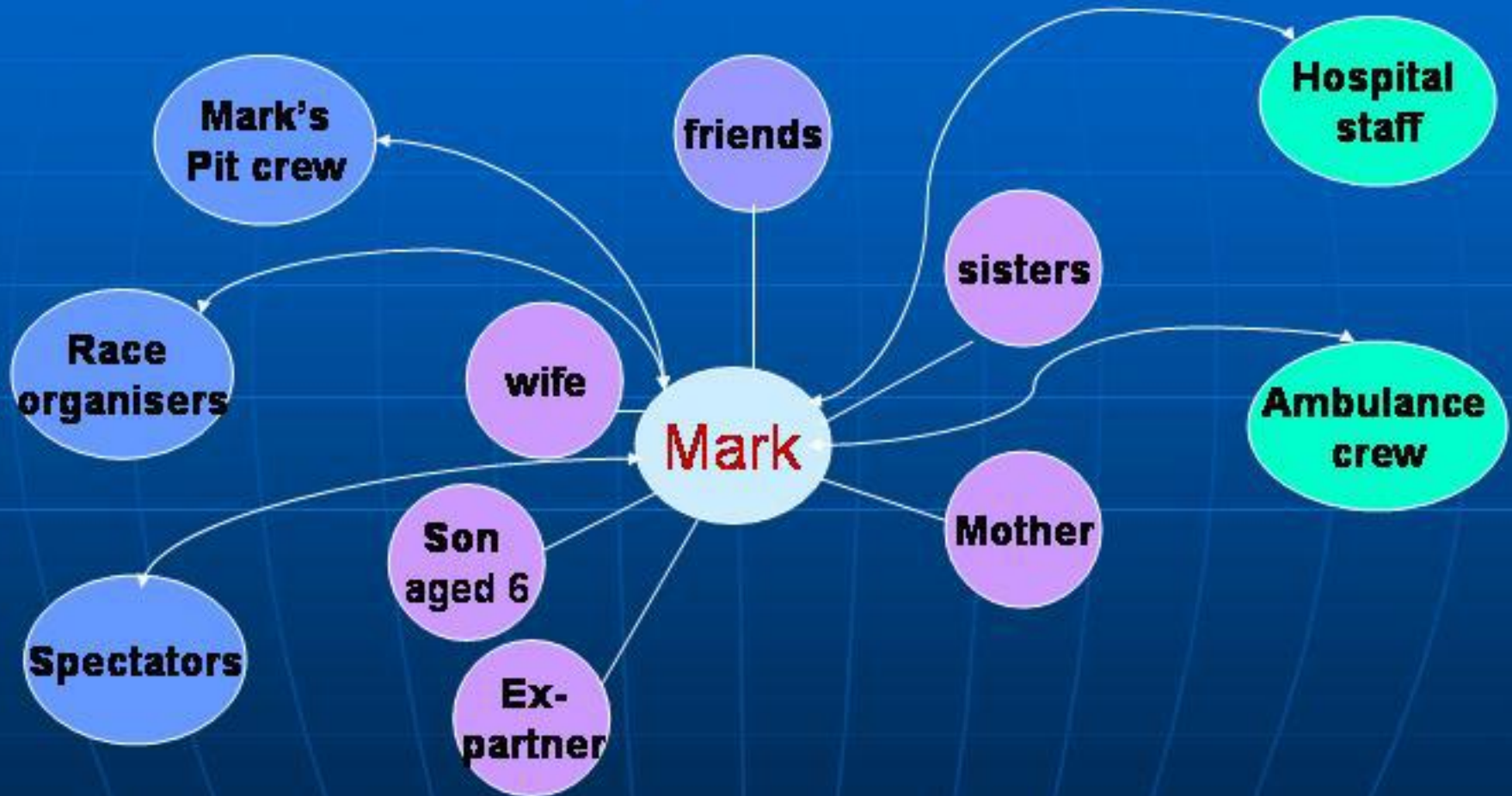


# Consequences of Common Shock / Trauma

- Bodily sensations
- Fight or flight
- Freeze response
- Sensitization –
  - ↑ reactivity,
  - ↑ hypervigilance
- Numbness & anger
- Memory effects
- Sadness, shame & helplessness,
- Aggression
- Turning inward
- Silence
- Shattered assumptions
- Inhibition of self-disclosure

# Who else may be impacted

...and may need counselling?





# Impediments to counselling – what gets in the way?

- M.D.T. assessment

*"he's fine - not upset at all"*

- Role expectations

*"I'm a health professional – I should be able to cope"*

- Gender stereotypes

*"I'm a man – I'm okay!"*

# Impediments to counselling – what gets in the way? (cont)

- Limited follow-up resources  
*"no-one there when I needed it"*
- \$\$\$
- No knowledge of counselling and it's uses
- Invisibility – who else is affected?



# Personal Experiences

- *"I never saw myself as the type who would need counselling. I could not believe it when I walked into my garden and just began to cry. Then I knew that I really needed help."*

*Mark aged 32*