



Special Investigations Unit

LETTER

Tom Walker BSW, RSW

Director of Business Development & Training Services

Canadian Training Institute

416-778-7056

cell 647-296-5613

1-877-889-6158



twalker@cantraining.org

AGENDA

- The event;
- Robby;
- Why I wrote the letter;
- The Letter
- Some things to think about for future;
- Questions



Thought for the Day



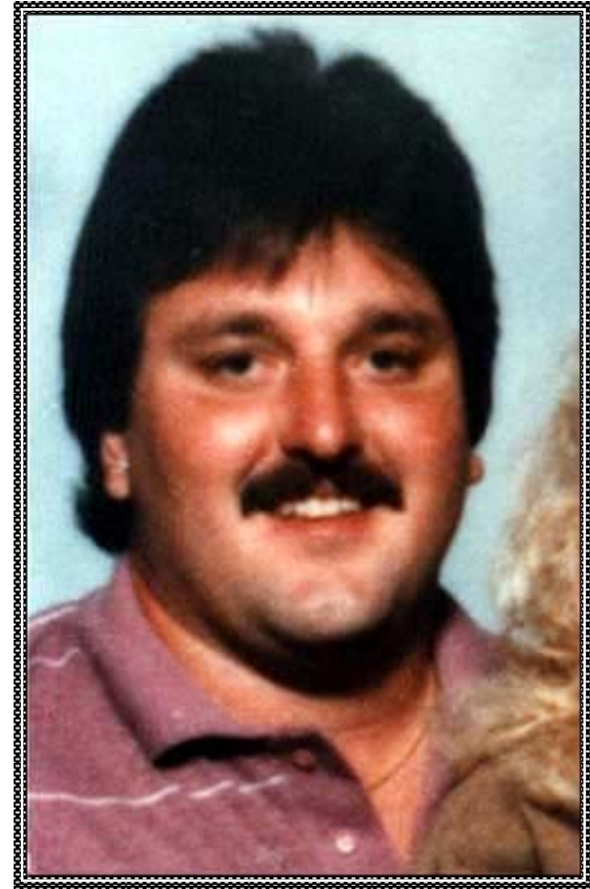
- ✓ Given their current level and response to stress (change), people always use their best problem-solving strategies to get their needs met, even if these strategies are dysfunctional.
- ✓ In other words, people behave the way they do for a reason (that makes sense to them in their own world-view, even if not to you).



This is who the Police didn't see **Robby (1)**

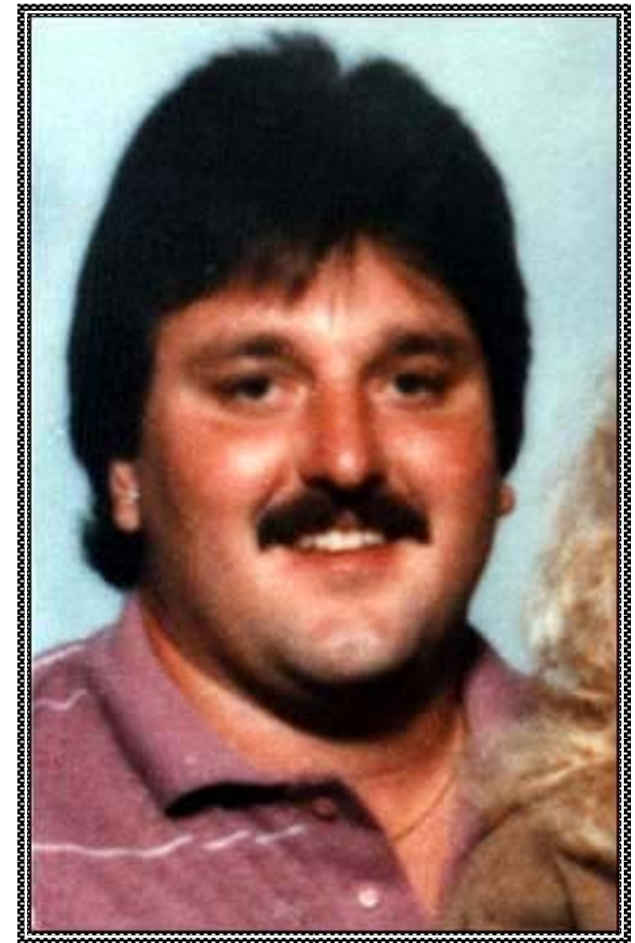
Context setting:

- My brother was:
 - A father;
 - A brother;
 - A hero;
 - A protector;
 - A Safety maker;
 - An Uncle;
 - A gifted mechanic;
 - A Provider;
 - Funny & comedic...



Robby (2)

- He used substances;
- He struggled with his past;
- He showed his temper at times;
- He had the misfortune of being the big brother;
- He lived in terror;
- He loved and yet he was feared and fearful.



Making Sense of the Situation



'We can send people to the moon, but we can't figure out a way to help people in a non-violent way.'

Thomas Walker, brother of Robert Walker

**DEBRA BLACK
STAFF REPORTER**



The Reason I Wrote The Letter (1)

- They were kind, respectful;
- They offered a quiet strength;
- They ensured that it was my brother before breaking the news - then they were straight and clear;
- They were unbiased; Class, morality, perceived stereotyping of who they would find stayed out of the picture;
- They never made me feel guilty by association, otherwise...



The Reason I Wrote The Letter (2)

- They listened and made it feel like it was okay to talk;
- They went above and beyond;
 - They walked with me to the morgue;
 - They went in with me and stood beside me to identify the body after discovery the T.V. camera's were not on.



LETTER

- To Mr. Cornish
- I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the great work of your staff. I first met with your staff on February 16th the morning of my brother's (Robert John Walker) death. They were the ones who broke the news to me when they came to my office. From the first time when the staff visited me at my office to offer the news of my brother's death, till when news that the investigation would be closed, I have felt respected and listened too. The job that you and your staff have is a difficult one and serves a great need.



LETTER

- As there will be an inquest I have requested standing to attempt to look at further bridging the gap between the police and the skilled profession of social work/social sciences and de-escalating potential violence with people who are either mental health or acting out because of their use of substances. Your team has most of these skills. The four staff that I had contact with have been exceptional. These men worked with compassion, empathy and clarity. Their ability to listen, support and offer thinking around the process was so exceptional that I asked about their training.



LETTER

- As a teacher of counselling skills, a counsellor working with youth and their families and a trainer, I was completely impressed with their ability to sit with silence and interject at appropriate times. Thanks again for this great service. It may be the very link that police services could utilize to talk down people like my brother to ensure and support potential violent situations from occurring.



Thanks

Some Suggestions

- The grieving process is a roller coaster - remember:
 - Many of us are traumatized by the situation;
 - Anger, sadness, bitterness and searching for answers may be our response;
 - Remember - they/we are grieving it is likely it is not about you;
 - We just want answers...



Early Warning Cues

- **Sweating;**
- **Swearing;**
- **Loud;**
- **Obnoxious;**
- **Fidgety;**
- **Crying / whining;**
- **Cold stare;**
- **Kissing teeth;**
- **Fist clenching;**
- **Pacing.**

Some Suggestions

- Make the roles of SIU and police clear and distinct;
- HOW - Attempt to not engage with the police on the scene;
- Don't dress in a 'detective like' suit;
- Be aware of your internalized biases and stigma - work on it...
- STORY OF TRAINING



Some Suggestions

CAVEAT - the reason some of this may not have happened is the guys figured I know the information;

- Offer numbers for bereavement services;
- Offer a write up on the inquest process;
- Offer numbers of lawyers who work with this - where possible numbers on the continuum of high to low cost lawyers;
- Offer local number for Victim Services;
- Offer some basic information about the stages of bereavement - example.



Stages of bereavement

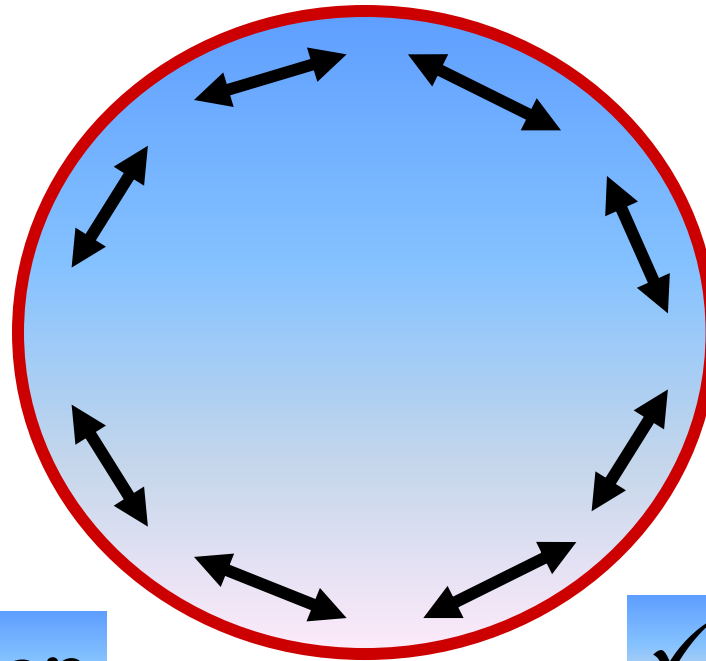
✓ Denial

✓ Acceptance

✓ Anger

✓ Depression

✓ Bargaining



Remember - care for the caregiver;

- Debrief situations;
- Develop a peer support System;
- Use your EAP - Many Don't;
- Do self care.

Thank you

