



My View

OUR CLIENTS

Last month, I had the privilege of meeting face to face with two survivors of tragedy who had received TIP assistance. Although I have read many thank you letters from our clients over the years, it's not often I actually sit down with them to talk about their TIP experience. The TIP Volunteers who assisted each client I met with accompanied me to my meetings with them. It was very heartwarming to observe the "reunions" of the two TIP Volunteers with the two clients they assisted.

I came away from my meetings with our clients with the following thoughts and feelings...

- Our clients are VERY grateful for the support they receive from TIP Volunteers. Although I already knew that, it was certainly reinforced when I actually heard and saw the gratitude expressed by these two clients to their respective TIP Volunteers.
- Our clients **want** to give back to TIP for what they received from TIP Volunteers. I met with these clients to ask them to speak at an Affiliate's Heroes With Heart Dinner (no easy task!). Both clients readily agreed to speak.
- Recovering from a sudden loss is a long and arduous process. Again, I knew that before meeting with our clients, as you do. But listening to their pain more than a year after their losses, and listening to the practical challenges that come with sudden loss (financial, for example) was certainly a reminder that TIP Volunteers are there at the very beginning of a very long painful process.
- Our clients do not remember the TIP Volunteers appearance, name or anything else about the TIP Volunteer EXCEPT...the tone of the volunteer's voice. In both meetings between the TIP Volunteer and their clients, the clients did not recognize the TIP Volunteers until they SPOKE. Then both clients instantly remembered the volunteers by their voices. This experience reinforced for me what we say in the Training Academy...it's not so much what you say, it's how you say it. This experience reinforced my belief that the tone of a helper's voice is critical to connecting with survivor of tragedy.

Overall, I came away from my experience with the two TIP clients saying "*I need to do this more often.*" I also came away believing that as an organization we need to develop more ways of connecting with our clients in the months and years after our initial intervention. I'm not suggesting that our volunteers continue a long term relationship with clients. I am suggesting that as an organization we need processes to reconnect with our clients after the initial intervention. I think both TIP and our clients would benefit.

Wayne would like to hear your thoughts.
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