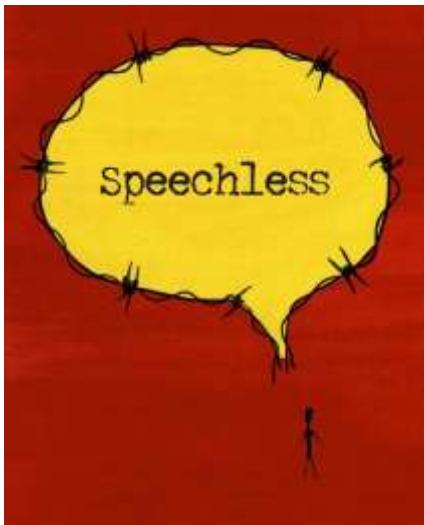


It's about people.



Texas Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling

What To Say When You Have No Clue What To Say



Words are my thing. Or they are supposed to be.

On November 9th, I was on the phone with our current president, Adrian Warren. I was working out of town, but all my assorted in-boxes were full of messages from people who were furious, confused, and downright terrified.

Our division is committed to issues related to how professional counselors can best serve LGBT+ individuals in the state of Texas. And no matter who you voted for, you can surely understand the fear that many LGBT+ individuals around the country felt because of this election.

We can hope that Donald Trump proves himself to be an ally to our community in the end. That election rhetoric was just that. Rhetoric. But his vice-president-elect's stance on LGBT+ issues has been communicated clearly. As has the stance of many, many of his supporters.

On November 9th, I had many friends, family, clients, and members of this very division reaching out. Looking for solace after an election outcome that they had greatly feared but didn't truly expect. But I didn't have the words.

Here I am. An author. A licensed professional counselor, FFS.

My job is words.

Using language to help people make sense of things. Move toward change. Reach understanding. Achieve peace.

I responded to everyone, of course. But I felt inane. I wasn't sure if I had the right words to do ANY of the above things. Then I realized my words, in this case, mean:

I'm still here. I'm with you.

I'm feeling many of the same feelings you are feeling.

And I'm so, so sorry that you don't feel safe in the world.

They don't help things make sense. They don't move us toward change. They don't help anyone reach understanding or achieve peace. But they mean I'm here. And I'm not going anywhere.

And this is where we start. Reminding each other that we are not alone. Holding space the best we can. And crying together when we can't.

And then what? What else do we do? How do we support people who are utterly and literally terrified? Whether you are frightened by this election outcome, or thrilled to bits with our nation's choice of our next president, the reality is that if you care about LGBT+ issues in the state of Texas (which is why you are a member of this division) we now have work to do to help the individuals we serve feel safe again.

One thing I noticed about this election, was so many of the choices that people were making (regardless of the actual end result) were about reacting against that which they disliked rather than moving toward that which helps make the world a better place.

And I would hate to see more of the same. More reacting against instead of moving toward. It sounds awfully Pollyanna-ish as I'm typing it. But that's because I'm struggling with the words. I don't mean anything fluffy and inane and Pollyanna-ish of the sort.

I mean eye open. Full awareness. About how we impact the world. How the world impacts us. How others perceive us. And the world. And we move towards BETTER. No matter how awkwardly. No matter how we stumble. No matter how badly we articulate our experience.

Because if I can stumble through this spastic message, we all can, right?

If we are moving toward that which sustains us. Makes us safe. Makes us whole. When we are proactive, rather than reactive we make better decisions, don't we?

I'm doubling down this holiday season. I'm increasing my advocacy work, increasing the service I give back to my community. Increasing my time caring for my family.

And I will try my level best to live the lesson imparted to me as a child. That EVERYONE, no matter how much they frustrate me (or, let's be honest, plain old *piss me off*) is my family.

And after the holidays? I keep going. I'm far from done yet.

Y'all with me?



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TALGBTIC Board Member

Dorrie Greenspan's World Peace Cookies

When I don't know what to say or do, I head to the kitchen. Because if nothing else, I can feed people.

If you have spent at least five minutes with me, you know my love of cookies. It's the holidays, after all. And enough butter and chocolate make all things better. Cookbook author extrodiaire, Dorrie Greenspan agreed entirely when she created this cookie recipe.

1 1/4 cups (170 grams) all-purpose flour

1/3 cup (28 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 stick plus 3 tablespoons (11 tablespoons; 5 1/2 ounces; 155 grams) unsalted butter, cut into chunks, at room temperature

2/3 cup (134 grams) packed light brown sugar

1/4 cup (50 grams) sugar

1/2 teaspoon fleur de sel or 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

5 ounces (142 grams) best-quality bittersweet chocolate, chopped into irregular sized bits

Sift the flour, cocoa and baking soda together.

Working with a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, beat the butter and both sugars together on medium speed until soft, creamy and homogenous, about 3 minutes. Beat in the salt and vanilla. Turn off the mixer, add all the dry ingredients and pulse a few times to start the blending. When the risk of flying flour has passed, turn the mixer to low and beat until the dough forms big, moist curds. Toss in the chocolate pieces and mix to incorporate. This is an unpredictable dough (see above). Sometimes it's crumbly and sometimes it comes together and cleans the sides of the bowl. Happily, no matter what, the cookies are always great.

Turn the dough out onto a work surface and gather it together, kneading it if necessary to bring it together. Divide the dough in half. Shape the dough into logs that are 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Don't worry about the length — get the diameter right, and the length will follow. (If you get a hollow in the logs, just start over.) Wrap the logs in plastic wrap and freeze them for at least 2 hours or refrigerate them for at least 3 hours.

When you're ready to bake: Center a rack in the oven and preheat it to 325 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

Working with one log at a time and using a long, sharp knife, slice the dough into 1/2-inch-thick rounds. (The rounds might crack as you're cutting them — don't be concerned, just squeeze the bits back onto each cookie.) Arrange the rounds on the baking sheets, leaving about 2 inches between them. (If you've cut both logs, keep one baking sheet in the fridge while you bake the other.)

Bake the cookies for 12 minutes — don't open the oven, just let them bake. When the timer rings, they won't look done, nor will they be firm, and that's just the way they should be. Transfer the baking sheet to a cooling rack and let the cookies rest until they are only just warm, at which point you can munch them, or let them reach room temperature (I think the texture's more interesting at room temperature).

Bake the remaining dough.



Letter From The President

My Friends and Colleagues,

As counselors, we are the inheritors of healing traditions going back to the very founding of human culture. We hold the space that gives people the time to rebuild themselves. I was talking with one of my interns today about something completely unrelated to politics and used this metaphor:

Good counselors see someone in a pit and reach down or throw them a rope to help them out. Overactive counselors climb down into the pit and push people out. The best counselors put a ladder down into the pit and climb down and sit with people for an hour. Then the counselors climb out, go about their own day, and come back the next day or week to sit again. Then finally, when the client is ready, they climb out together.

Over the next days, weeks, and years, the LGBT+ clients this division is focused on—as well as all those who call themselves *other*—will be sitting down in their pits. We need to join them. Not with numbers, facts, and arguments disguised as “challenging” or “reality testing;” we need to just sit and “hold space” until they’re ready to start climbing out.

However, we are people too. This means that we have our own pits to sit in on occasion. Many of us are probably in pits that mirror those of our clients right now. But, we don't have the luxury of wallowing in our pits. Sure, sit with the emotions swirling around down there. Get a friend or your own therapist to sit down there with you. Then. Get up! Shake the filth off. And go heal. This is a time to be at our best. We cannot afford to be compromised by our own identities and wounds. Go do your own work. Yes, be authentic; but also, give yourself enough space and work to reduce the backflow of sewage within you. We cannot afford, though, to let it all overflow into our work.

We are healers. We need to heal. And I mean we need to let our own wounds heal and we need to help heal those of others.

Climbing out,

Adrian
Adrian S. Warren, PhD, LPC-S
TALGBTIC President 2016-17

Thank you to everyone who came out and visited our booth at TCA this year, joined our division, and volunteered to help us achieve our goals. It was a remarkable showing of support, and you are appreciated in a way that words cannot fully express.

We will be reaching out to all our members over the course of the next weeks, but I would like to extend a special thank you to Katrina Moore and Jenna Blanchet. Both have been active in our division for several years now, and they are responsible for the amazing booth we had this year.

Additionally, Katrina was just voted into our division board, and will start her service as TALGBTIC President-Elect in July of 2017 under the presidency of Chris Broyles.

Day of The Dead comes right before the Transgender Day of Remembrance each year. Therefore, our booth this year was an Ofrenda, not to just all lives lost, but in the names of the 23 transgender individuals that were murdered in 2016.

Crisis Hotlines Courtesy of the Icarus Project

[The Trevor Project](#): 1-866-488-7386 (for LGBT+ youth ages 13-25)

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-8255, [Lifeline Crisis Chat](#) (text based) (both are general audience)

[Trans Lifeline](#): 1-877-565-8860 (by and for trans people)

[NAMI](#)'s Crisis Text Line: text NAMI to 741-741 (general audience)

[ImAlive Instant Messaging](#) (general audience)

