

## Center for Health and Learning

6863 B West Charleston ~ Las Vegas, Nevada 89117  
(702) 684-7850 ~ 383-6012 (24 HR. MESSAGE) ~ [www.healthlearning.org](http://www.healthlearning.org)

# PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DIRECT CONTACT: GARY WATERS, MSW, Ed.S (702) 497-0447

## ***LAS VEGAS PROGRAM OFFERING FREE SERVICES FOR "ELECTION DEPRESSION"***

LAS VEGAS, NV:

The **Center for Health and Learning**, a Las Vegas based non-profit counseling service is offering free counseling to persons who may be experiencing emotional or psychological problems as a result of the recent 2008 general election. The Center for Health and Learning which is known for providing free and low cost mental health services in southern Nevada decided to offer the service after receiving several calls for counseling for persons who said they experiencing "difficult feelings and emotions " because of the results of the recent presidential election.

"We are seeing people who are confused and disoriented as a result of the election" stated Gary Waters, MSW, Ed.S, the volunteer Director of Clinical and Community Services for the Center for Health and Learning. "People are looking for support and understanding in a time that appears to be very unsettling to some people" Waters stated.

The program offers special counseling and support services for "...loss depression and grief which persons may be experiencing as a direct or indirect result of the 2008 general election". The Center for Health and Learning is associated with the **University of Nevada-Las Vegas School of Social Work** which consults with the Center and provides staff for internships in clinical social work and marital and family therapy. The Center provides extensive counseling services for individuals, couples and families.

"The potential profound changes in our society and communities as a result of the election could be overwhelming and difficult for some people to understand", stated Waters who is a licensed psychotherapist in Nevada and California. "This is especially true terms of how anticipated social changes will impact our lives." Waters said.

These special counseling services, which are available at no cost to anyone are provided by highly experienced clinical social workers and behavioral specialists at the Center Health and Learning in Las Vegas. Waters stated that he hopes the service will be useful to "anyone struggling with the uncertainty of the dynamic new political and cultural changes occurring in the country".

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### **Counseling, Social Adjustment and Support for Persons Experiencing Behavioral or Psychological Difficulties Following the General Election of 2008**

- Finding it difficult to understand the changes anticipated by the 2008 election?
- Confused and disillusioned as a result of what the upcoming political changes may mean to you?
- Feel isolated and abandoned regarding your interests, values and hopes?

Change can be difficult... especially when it comes suddenly. During such times, it is natural to experience an array of feelings that are new or even troubling. However, help is available to assist in understanding sudden unexpected or difficult social, political or personal changes.

The Center for Health and Learning is offering special counseling and support services for loss depression and grief which persons may be experiencing as a direct or indirect result of the 2008 general election. For some people, the profound changes that have and will result could be overwhelming and difficult to understand – especially in terms of how anticipated social changes will impact their life. Special counseling services provided by highly experienced clinical social workers and behavioral specialists at the Center Health and Learning can be helpful in understanding individual reactions to the social and political changes underway in our community and country.

#### **Focus of Services**

Persons experiencing a heightened sense of any of the following symptoms may be experiencing social adjustment and acute behavioral and psychological conditions as a result of the unmet expectations and personal experiences resulting from the political and elective cycle recently completed. Such symptoms may include:

- Disillusionment regarding the future of the state or country
- Anger and resentment of recent election results
- Frustration regarding potential social and political impacts yet to come
- Sudden onset of anxiety and depression connected to persistent thoughts about the election results
- Sleeplessness and excessive worry about social and political changes
- Sense of abandonment and disorientation
- Interpersonal conflicts based in political ideology
- Sudden onset of feelings of social instability
- Feeling the need to move, make profound life changes or flee

#### **Cost**

There is **no cost** for these services. The Center for Health and Learning are providing them as a public community service.

#### **Time of Service**

All services are provided at times most convenient for the person receiving them. Every effort will be made to accommodate the schedules of individuals, families, and students. Services are available during day and on some evenings. Some programs or services may be available on Saturdays.

#### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

All services are strictly confidential.

#### **How to Get More Information or Make an Appointment or Referral**

Call the Center at (702) 684-7850 or (702) 383-6012

**Center for Health and Learning Services**  
Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy, Assessment and Screening / Educational Consultation  
Counseling Clinics / School Social Work / Child Guidance / Individual, Couple, Marital and Family Counseling  
*The Center for Health and Learning is a non-profit program supported by various community health and wellness resources*

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## TALKING POINTS

### Understanding the Psychology of Election Depression and Euphoria Behavioral or Psychological Difficulties Following the General Election of 2008

1. The election results for some people, combined with job losses, business failures, the financial meltdown, the home mortgage crisis and budget reductions in education and health services combine to create a "perfect storm" for emotional and psychological problems to arise or become more severe.
2. Sudden cultural changes are never easy to assimilate, and some persons may resent pressure to conform to the new rules that they may feel are being forced upon them. Persons who feel this way need time to make adjustments to the new order in accordance with their unique capacity to internal changes necessary to feel comfortable with the new cultural norms.
3. For persons who view themselves as "winners" of dramatic cultural or political changes may also feel extensive pressure to "perform" and "comply" with the stated and often heated rhetoric of the winning campaigns. Certainly, those that feel loss as a result of the election are going to be avid in their monitoring of the campaign claims and quick to point out variances in performance versus pledges. Stress and pressure to perform can be as severe for winners as feelings of loss and grief for losers.
4. Persons who see themselves as "winners" and supported winning candidates may feel directionless and "hollow" as a result of having achieved their goal or objective and now have no place to direct or focus their energy and interests. Campaigns are intense and demanding activities and create significant psychological momentum. The absence of the campaign goals initiates a mental and emotional void now that the goals have been achieved and nothing is psychologically available to replace it. This let-down is a result of having no direction or goal subsequent to the objective they sought which was realized by the election results alone.
5. Winners can also have highly inflated performance expectations of the winner which simply cannot be fulfilled by the winning candidate. In addition, losers are quick to point out where winners are failing to fulfill their stated campaign guarantees and promises. If those expectations are not realized (often within a timeframe that is known only to the individual) there is a risk for persons who perceive themselves as the election "winners" becoming highly disillusioned with the candidate they supported. This creates a secondary let-down weeks, months or even years after the date of the election- and may even establish a psychological paradox of being "conned" by the candidate they supported.
6. Performance anxiety is a very real fact when those that lost in the election are quick to point out unfulfilled campaign promises throughout the duration of the winner's term of office. Days and weeks following a profound change in political landscapes can create a feeling akin to "sugar high" built on the thrill of victory and belief that massive cultural or political changes can be achieved quickly. This is both an unrealistic expectation and error in judging how political and cultural changes are institutionalized within societies.
7. Individuals support candidates for various reasons. Supporters of winners are not uniform in their expectations in subsequent performance of winning candidates. If a person support for a candidate was solely based on one or a narrow factor they may overlook or ignore very real performance errors that others who based their support on broader factors cannot. This creates dissidence, disillusionment and the ultimate feeling of abandonment. Support for any candidate on narrow or single demographic or cultural factors is psychologically, culturally and politically shallow. Candidates are ultimately judged on performance – not appearance.
8. Persons who feel a sense of loss following an election or what they perceive is a dramatic cultural change affecting them eventually internalize the change and adapt to the new social norm. While change may be slow- it is eventual as the pressures to conform to new norms is more than one singular individual can withstand if they wish to remain in the general social and cultural community. Those that do not run the risk of marginalization and viewed as cultural outliers.

## COPING TECHNIQUES FOR FEELINGS OF POLITICAL LOSS AND GRIEF

Gary Waters, MSW, Ed.S

**1. Keep in mind "This Too Shall Pass"**

The old saying makes sense in that all new things eventually are no longer new, innovative or shocking. In fact, you most assuredly will get emotionally and psychologically accustomed to much of the new political landscape – and probably much more quickly than you think. Political ideas come and go and you can count on things to change – most likely by the next election cycle.

**2. Remember time will indeed heal**

Your dreams are not dead- they are still alive in you. Time is a healing agent as it allows individuals to consider the real effects of the trauma and individual and community reactions to it. Time provides the opportunity to reassess your strengths and gather momentum for future activities and events – even political campaigns.

**3. Stay in the Positive Zone**

Stay away from negative talk and "disaster" thinking. Politics are never permanent so the disaster you perceive may just be an opportunity for the future. Staying positive helps you focus on the constructive aspects of moving forward and building new political plans. Larger political effects and impacts of which you strongly disagree can be minimized by keeping a positive attitude about your own values, ideals and hopes for the country. Remember – you control your own life. It's still a free country.

**4. Talk to friends**

Get in touch and communicate with your personal and political support system. Discuss the situation clearly and rationally with those you trust and whose judgment you often depend. If you need to, seek professional counseling or support.

**5. Get the facts and stay focused**

Make sure that your feelings and thoughts are based in real facts and not just hearsay or conjecture. There are many rumors and sound bites that are simply not true about the effects of the "new political landscape". Don't allow yourself to project political effects that may never happen. Getting more information makes you a better consumer of all types of information, especially political information.

**6. Don't feel sorry for yourself**

Most certainly you are not the only person who feels the way you do. Recognize that feelings about all political ideas and outcomes are universally shared by millions of others. You are not alone in your thoughts. Many feel the way you do.

**7. Stay in your normal routines**

Do the things you enjoy most with the people you enjoy being with. You will quickly realize that your life after the election is much like it was the day before the election. Staying with these routines makes things seem "right" and "normal".

**8. Don't over react**

Think and consider any reactions and avoid any sudden or abrupt life changes. Stay clear of life changing events that are linked to visceral reactions to what you may now believe are the new political realities of the time. Anger and hostile actions hurt you more than others and make you look like a silly or even unstable. It is acceptable, and even quite smart, to not to respond to the enthusiasm of the winners and their supporters. Don't strike out at others or yourself – it is ineffective and not worth it.

**9. Keep an open mind**

The best life is one that allows the person to be open to new experiences and even opportunities never before imagined. You never know what will come of the new political realities and it is wise to keep your options and your mind receptive to experience new things. You simply do not know what the future will be- but when it comes it is best to see it coming.

**10. Be yourself**

Don't go phony. Pretending to be "supportive" or "enthused" about the election results you find disappointing is often transparent and is as ineffective and as being overly critical and hostile to persons who supported the winning candidates. Be natural in your reactions to news events as the political fortunes of the winners unfold. It is even okay to be silent or to elect to not engage in political conversations – even just for awhile.