



How is *Seasons for Growth*[®] different from counselling?

Firstly (and most importantly) counselling is provided by people trained specifically for this role. The majority of Companions using *Seasons for Growth* **do not** have this specialist training and the corresponding qualifications. Whilst there are increasing numbers of counsellors choosing to train in *Seasons for Growth* they are aware that the purpose of the program is not for counselling but instead for what is best understood as 'psycho-education'. Such education can be facilitated by **people who are not trained counsellors** but who have been provided with particular knowledge and skills through the mandatory training provided with the *Seasons for Growth* program.

A second difference is that while individual counselling and/or counselling groups attempt to modify attitudes and behaviours by helping participants to experience personal growth through sharing, exploring and working through personal issues, a psycho-educational program such as Seasons for Growth attempts to provide support and challenge attitudes and behaviours by providing new information and teaching new ways of thinking and behaving. This difference is expressed well by Geldard & Geldard (2001, p.20) who point out that:

'An important difference between psycho-educational groups and counselling groups is that in psycho-educational groups the process primarily involves acquiring information to enable learning new ways of thinking and behaving, whereas in counselling groups the method for promoting change focuses primarily on the exploration and resolution of personal issues'.

Geldard & Geldard (2001) go on to point out that what is common between the two types of group is that they both influence the child's thinking, so that changes to cognitive processing occur and these changes are likely to result in altered behaviours. Seasons for Growth is structured around this dynamic and uses sound teaching and learning to enable participants to learn new ways of thinking and behaving in response to difficult issues around loss and grief.