

ministrators, sociologists, psychiatrists, psychologists and others concerned with the administration of mental health services in disaster areas, this book reviews an extensive scientific literature and comes up with important conclusions and recommendations. Of these the most important is probably the recognition that, since disasters can have serious consequences for the mental health of victims, relatives and even professional caregivers, this needs to be taken into account in the planning of a response to disasters.

The first part of the book reviews research on the psychological and social consequences of disasters. Despite great differences between disasters, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder emerges as a well-documented consequence of many. Factors which increase the risk of this and other disturbances of mental health can be identified and enable people whose health is at risk to be offered special help.

The types of help likely to be of use are discussed in Part II. The emphasis here is on 'outreach' with those at risk being con-

tacted as soon as possible after the disaster and a general agreement that it is best to avoid attributions of mental illness. Support can be given to individuals, families or groups and a variety of approaches are described. So too is the support and 'debriefing' of caring staff.

In the USA, as in Britain, disaster plans seldom make any provision for preventing psychiatric problems and treating those that arise. The final section of this book looks at the need for proper planning and for public and professional education in preparation for disasters. It is suggested that every Community Mental Health Plan should include the management of disasters and every Emergency and Disaster Plan should contain a mental health component.

With so many contributors to this book it is to be expected that the quality of contribution is uneven. One would not expect so moving a topic to be boring but there were several chapters whose analytic detachment seemed remote from the chaos and passion of a disaster area. Even so

there is much to be learned from each chapter and, although the same basic messages emerge repeatedly, the editor has done a good job in welding together a disparate group of contributors. She is Mary Lystad, Chief of the Emergency Services Branch of the United States National Institute of Mental Health, and consequently this is a book which will have a particular appeal to planners and administrators. As such it contrasts with Beverley Raphael's *When Disaster Strikes* (Basic Books, New York) which is aimed at the clinician. Both books should be read by all who are seriously interested in preparing for the disasters that will surely continue to occur.

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Someone Special Has Died. A new booklet for grieving children, available at £1 inc. p&p from St. Christopher's Hospice, 51-59 Lawrie Park Road, London SE26 6DZ.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

As a nurse specialising in Accident and Emergency (A&E) work, I have for many years tried to develop a service which is knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, the needs of bereaved relatives. I have also emphasised the need for nursing and other staff to receive professional care and support for the emotional stress they face in this type of work¹⁻³.

Your readers may be interested to know that my post in the A&E Department at Leeds General Infirmary has recently been changed from Senior Charge Nurse to Clinical Nurse Specialist—Crisis Care. The post now allows me to spend one-third of my time in teaching and will enable me to

develop workshops and seminars in the crisis and process of bereavement from the helper's point of view. It is also important that in my work in the Department, opportunities for research are taken. We have much to learn if this important work is to be developed as it deserves.

Yours sincerely,

BOB WRIGHT,
Clinical Nurse Specialist—Crisis Care,
Accident and Emergency Department,
Leeds General Infirmary, Yorkshire, UK.

References

1. Wright B. Sudden death: nurses' reactions and relatives' opinions. *Bereavement Care* 1989; 8: 2-4.
2. Wright B. Critical incidents. *Bereavement Care* 1989; 8: 28-30.
3. Wright B. Caring in Crisis. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

CONFERENCE ON HOLISTIC APPROACHES

A conference on **Holistic Approaches to Disability and Mental Health** will be held on 17th October, 1990, hosted by The Psychiatry of Disability Division at St. George's Hospital Medical School. Topics covered include: promoting independence, caring for the carers, bereavement, communication difficulties, relationships and sexuality, the place of technology, family therapy. Application forms and further information regarding this and all our other conferences are available from Philippa Weitz, The Conference Unit, Dept. of Mental Health Sciences, St. George's Hospital Medical School, Cranmer Terrace, London SW17 0RE. Tel: 081-672 9944 ext. 55534.

FORTHCOMING COURSES AND CONFERENCES

INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN BEREAVEMENT. Autumn 1990. Reading, U.K. Thursday evenings 27th September-29th November. Enquiries to Reading Cruse on Reading 588133.

WIDOWED PERSONS SERVICE 13th NATIONAL CONFERENCE. 4th-6th October, 1990. Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Keynote speaker Dr. Joyce Brothers, psychologist. 40 concurrent workshops focusing on aspects of widowhood and bereavement. Details

from Carrie L. Bacon, Widowed Persons Service, American Association of Retired Persons, 1909 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049.

Correction: Third International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society, Sydney, Australia, will take place 30th June-4th July, 1991 and not 1990 as given in the previous issue of *Bereavement Care*.



Cruse News

Cruse is the national United Kingdom voluntary organisation for bereavement care

Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR, England (tel. 081-940 4818)

Director: Alec Sandison Training Officer: Nicholas Tyndall
Information Officer: Wendy Wilson

New Director for Cruse

Cruse welcomes as its new director Mr. Alec Sandison, FCCA, who took up his post on 14th March. Mr. Sandison, a qualified accountant, has held a number of senior management positions and was previously Chief Executive for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. He has worked voluntarily with the Samaritans since 1975.

Derek Nuttall, MBE

Derek Nuttall, until recently Director of

Cruse, has been awarded the MBE for his work with bereaved people. He sees the award as 'an acknowledgement of the needs of bereaved people and an endorsement of the work of Cruse'. All who knew Derek will wish him well in his new work as Minister of the United Reformed Church in Windsor.

New Cruse Branches

Since our last issue, new Cruse Branches have opened at Elgin, Ipswich, Burton-on-Trent and Uttlesford (Essex).

BEREAVEMENT CARE JOURNAL

is for bereavement counsellors and all who wish to deepen their understanding of bereavement. It is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be lent, resold, reproduced in part or in entirety, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's consent.

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Overseas Rates: Europe. Individual Subscribers (as defined above) £8.50. Libraries and Organisations (as defined above) £13.50.

Countries Outside Europe: Individual Subscribers (as defined above) £11.00. Libraries and Institutions (as defined above) £15.00. All prices inclusive of air mail. Kindly remit by sterling draft payable in London.

Bereavement Care Journal is published three times a year in Spring, Summer and Winter. Some back numbers available at £2.50 plus 28p postage (inland). Free index on request. Offprints of single articles available at 40p.