

BOOK REVIEW

HELPING THE BEREAVED

Alicia Skinner, Daniel S Dworkin. New York: Basic Books, 1992. £18.95 hb

This most attractive, lucid book, by two clinical psychologists in American academia and private practice, provides a broad introduction to grief therapy with individuals and groups and to the need for self-examination and self-care for therapists. Their framework is the American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM3R 1987) and much of the literature also is from across the Atlantic. The valuable chapter on cultural considerations in grief therapy mainly relates to minority groups within the US.

This valuable book puts the reader in touch with a wealth of clinical experience, the sections on loss and spiritual issues being particularly welcome. It should, however, be read alongside European literature on bereavement and trauma and on the interaction between bereavement and traumatic loss.

Any future edition would benefit from an enlarged section on children and adolescents and more on 'specific types of loss' such as homicide and through natural and man-made disaster and violence with discussion of the interaction between trauma and loss. The current edition deals with only AIDS, suicide and war.

Jean Harris Hendriks
Consultant Child Psychiatrist

ABSTRACTS

A Group Approach to Overcome Loss: A Model for a Bereavement Service in General Practice. Fenner P, Manchershaw A. *Professional Nurse* 1993; **8**(10): 680-684.

The authors, a nurse practitioner and clinical psychologist in the UK, describe how they set up small, short-term groups to bring together bereaved people who, because their grief was unresolved, seemed at risk of becoming increasingly depressed and isolated. Each group took part in six meetings, at which they talked about their experiences and emotions. The conclusion was that these meetings were sufficiently helpful to suggest that group bereavement counselling should be made available within the general health setting.

Latent Functions of Enfranchising the Disenfranchised Griever. Kameron J. *Death Studies* 1993; **17**(3): 281-287.

An increasing number of people, such as gay lovers, co-workers and friends, are debarred from grieving because their relationship to the dead person has no social legitimacy. The author suggests ways in which the legitimising of such relationships could not only allow such people to express their grief but might also improve their position in society. For example, he proposes putting pressure on employers to extend bereavement benefits such as counselling to grievers who at the moment are disenfranchised by employers' personnel policies.

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126 Sheen Road
Richmond
Surrey TW9 1UR, UK

Telephone: 081-940 4818
Fax: 081-940
(Editorial office and advertisements as above)

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Bereavement Care is published three times a year in Spring, Summer and Winter. All prices are inclusive of airmail postage. Payment must be in sterling (except for subscribers in USA) and may be made by cheque, money order or credit card (Mastercard, Eurocard, Visa, Access). Most back numbers available at £3.00 plus 35p (UK).

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Printed by Woodcote Ltd,
Epsom, Surrey TK18 7HL, UK

The Conference Unit

Department of Mental Health Sciences
St. George's Hospital Medical School

BEREAVEMENT AND COUNSELLING

New approaches in helping people come to terms with loss
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This conference will review the recent developments in the field of bereavement research. It will assess whether the thinking put forward by Dr. Murray Parkes 20 years ago is still valid in our pluralistic society. We will examine who benefits most from counselling, how to assess the risks attached to bereavement and what the bereaved person needs. The Conference is Part I of a two part Death & Dying Course. Part II will be held on 20th April 1994. Course leaders for Part II include Dr Lyn Franchino, Professor Sheila Hollins and Dr Frank Smith.



For further details including a registration form please contact:
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