

POSTBAG

**Please write to us. We welcome the views of all
CRUSE workers and also our other readers**

From:

DR. MICHAEL F. GREEN, MA FRCP, The Royal Free Hospital, New End, Hampstead, London NW3 1JB

I recently had an interesting experience where a dying patient was able to help educate students. This elderly woman, who I had also known as a friend, had asked me and her G.P. to keep her fully informed of her diagnosis and that our overriding priority should be to advise her about symptomatic and caring management of the last phase of her life. She did not want lots of investigations, and treatment which would make her ill even if it might prolong her life for a short while. Although she was also worried about her brother and somewhat depressed about her own circumstances she was fully in control of her fate and we agreed to go along with her point of view.

There has been considerable discussion about pre-bereavement counselling for the dying person and for relatives and friends. In this lady's case her mental strength, life-long experience in personal and professional life (she had been a social worker and well known author) and clear cut views meant that we had no substantial pre-bereavement counselling problem. Obviously, we did need to review the situation regularly and discuss practical medical problems such as whether to prescribe an anti-biotic for intercurrent infection and even whether she should have a blood transfusion.

From this strong base, probably rare but not necessarily unique, I was able to use her in an outpatient clinic to teach a group of medical students. She explained to them her personal and religious attitudes and the reasons why she did not want too much done. She was articulate and able to talk to the students when I left

the room, which I did deliberately to allow her to say things which she might have not necessarily wanted to say in my presence, however frank our relationship was.

Medical and other students, and qualified staff in health and social services rarely have enough experience and teaching in the art of medicine rather than its science, and little opportunity to take part in ethical discussions. Dying patients may be very helpful in the teaching situation both to explain their symptoms and to crystallise their own wishes. Although she did not admit it I suspect that this patient was also grateful to be given the opportunity to talk and to demonstrate her relative calmness whilst dying from leukaemia, and to feel useful.

Obviously, "patients" should not be asked to become teachers lightly but she did provoke me to consider using patients in this way more often in the future.

MICHAEL F. GREEN, MA FRCP
CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN

From:

MRS. NAOMI JARVIS, PRESIDENT, New Zealand Widows and Widowers' Association (Inc) Auckland Branch

Some of our members are hoping to visit the U.K. this year and you can be sure they will contact Cruse. In the same way, some of our members would welcome a visit from any of your people who come this way. We should be glad if your workers would give them our telephone numbers. Mine is Bucklands Beach, Auckland 8344231. Our branch number is Buckland Beach 587322.

NAOMI JARVIS

Editor's note: Cruse has three branches in New Zealand, formed about twenty years ago. They are mainly social groups without a counselling service. For anyone planning to visit the country, we print their addresses:

Mrs. E.H. Reynolds, 450 Gloucester Street, Taradale, North Island;
Mrs. M. Drown, 303 Sylvan Road., Hastings, H. Bay, North Island;
Mrs. R.E. Flaherty, 18 Menin Road, Onekawa, Napier, H. Bay, North Island.

From:

Mr. Patrick Langfier, Editor, Richmond, Barnes and Richmond Branch Bulletin.

I am satisfied that self-inking rubber stamps provide the best answer for overprinting literature and handbills with referral and secretarial details, even though they do involve individual stamping. (It is remarkable how quickly 1,000 can be done once one gets the rhythm).

There are several types

of self-inking stamps capable of printing many thousands of times before fitting a replacement pad. What is important is a facility for changing the "message" for a reasonable cost.

After carefully studying the economic aspects I can highly recommend Trodat equipment, for which a first-class direct service is available from Mark C. Brown & Son Ltd PO Box 69, 4 Baker St., Hull, HU2 8HS. They send a catalogue if you ask them. My recommendation is the self-inking stamp model 4204 which last year cost £12.24p plus VAT, including cost of die for the six line "message".

As a branch organising secretary for a limited period I had our letterheads printed with all officers names except that of secretary, for which I used a Trodat "Printy" model 4912. It had previously had another name and address. I bought a new rubber die and fixed it myself. Cost of die £5.25p plus VAT.

PATRICK LANGFIER

(Continued from page 3) HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

to be met. The counselling of widows, group meetings, Parents' Circles and amenity schemes had to be covered and routine office work as well. There were interviews to be dealt with, plans for local work, public speaking, publicity articles and appeals and an increasing number of publications were needed both to inform others and to help membership. Widows wrote in from all over the country and we kept our policy of helping all ourselves or making contact with organisations with whom they could be put in touch.

A CLEARING HOUSE

We worked through our statutory and voluntary contacts and with M.P.'s too. We were, in fact, soon to be known as a "clearing house" of information for the widowed. Men who had been widowed came to us too but so inundated were we with widows' work that we felt

the time was not then ripe to take on their problems. That we hoped would come later.

We always found the Press helpful but were soon aware that their interest loaded us with work without giving the financial help. We had to hold back until we could reach what people called "the big money." It was after my husband's death that we learned we might be given a Government Grant for administrative costs but we would have to raise funds to buy premises.

We secured the Grant and were able to move into Cruse House in 1975. Our Grant also covered the salary of our National Organiser who joined us in 1974. On my retirement Derek Nuttall took over as Director.

Looking back I can see how urgently our work was needed and how establishing an understanding of the bereaved has filtered through to every conceivable profession where caring for others is taken into account.

I do not see an end to the work of Cruse while people care for each other as individuals in a family setting.

DIARY

INSTITUTE OF FAMILY THERAPY
(LONDON), 5 Tavistock Place,
London W.C.1.

Life Span Psychology: Implications
for Family Therapy. Dr. Patricia
Minuchin, PH.D.

Three sessions of three hours,
5-8 pm April 21 and 28 and
May 5, 1982.

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED URBAN STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL, Grange Rd.,
BRISTOL.

Seminar: Social services and
Social Security - new developments
and emergent issues. May 5-7.1982.

For details of all NVCO courses
listed below, please contact
Jenny Hill, Management Training
Officer, National Council for
Voluntary Organisations, 26 Bedford
Square, London WC1B 3HU.

One day seminar for Chairmen of
Voluntary Management Committees.
May 13 London; June 24 Manchester;
October 14 Leeds; November 11 Bristol.

Making Meetings Work, two-day
seminar. May 4-5 Bristol;
October 12-13 London.

Effective Speaking, two-day work-
shop. June 3-4 London, November
23-24 Leeds.

Grantmanship workshop. Two day
discussion led by advisers from
Government, Trusts and NVCO.
April 20-21 Manchester and
September 29-30 London.

Fundraising workshop - two days.
September 27-28 London.

Management in a team setting.
Two-day course to help partici-
pants to take action to improve
growth and performance of their
team and individuals.
April 15-16 Coventry; June 16-17
Manchester; October 21-22 Leeds;
November 18-19 Bristol.

Developing the Secretary's Role.
Two-day course London November 2-3.