

**REMEMBRANCE:
an anthology of readings,
prayers and music chosen for
memorial services**

Ned Sherrin (ed). London: Michael Joseph, 1996. £17.50 hb*.

Christians usually have only one opportunity to gather together after one of their members has died, at the funeral. These can be deeply moving occasions, but they come too soon to mark the end of a relationship: for those most affected by bereavement, it is still too soon to say 'goodbye'. Unlike many other religions, Christianity provides no second liturgy to mark the end of mourning and to give people reassurance that their duty to mourn the dead is done.

A remembrance service can fill this gap. As Ned Sherrin, in the introduction to this book, says, 'It is often a happy way to put a period to a time of mourning'. It also provides those who were not able to come to the funeral with an opportunity to remember the person who has died and, because it is not bound by the stricter rules of a formal liturgy, it gives the family an opportunity to create a ritual that reflects the uniqueness of the dead person and the particular needs of those who survive.

This book has been compiled by drawing together, in successive chapters, the readings, poems, prayers, hymns and other music, both sacred and secular, that were used in 36 memorial services. Other items have been suggested by 25 distinguished contributors. They range from popular hymns, such as 'Jerusalem' and 'Abide with me', to idiosyncratic readings and verse that may have had special significance to a particular person but cannot be recommended for wider use.

Memorial services need not be expensive. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that so many of the services reported here are those of the great and famous. Most of us cannot afford a full symphony orchestra and choir at our memorial service and the inclusion of popular recorded music would have added to the usefulness of the book (The most popular recording to be played at American memorial services is said to be Frank Sinatra's rendering of 'I did it my way'). This said, I was relieved to find most of my own special preferences among the items recorded here and I do not doubt that anyone planning a memorial service, either their own or someone else's, will find this book an invaluable source of ideas. Its value would be even greater if it were accompanied by a compact disc of extracts from the music. Perhaps some enterprising recording company would help Cruse Bereavement Care with this.

Colin Murray Parkes
Consultant Psychiatrist

*Available at the special price of £14.95 from Cruse Bereavement

Care, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR, UK. All royalties go to Cruse Bereavement Care.

SUICIDE: SURVIVORS

Adina Wroblewski. Minneapolis, USA: Afterwords, 1994. US\$18.45 pb inc p&p.

This is the second edition of Adina Wroblewski's guide for those who have been bereaved by suicide. Like Alison Wertheimer, author of *A Special Scar*, the writer begins with an account of a personal experience. Since her 21-year-old daughter's suicide in 1979, Wroblewski has accumulated knowledge on this subject and her clearly-written book contains a wealth of accessible information for the reader. It is a user-friendly, practical guide offering advice and addressing such issues as: how to talk about suicide both inside and outside the family (one of the problems that distinguishes this form of bereavement); what to tell children (the truth); how to deal with panic attacks; and that contest which can take place for 'worst place' in the hierarchy of grief. Bereaved people, and those who enjoy books with a transatlantic flavour, may find this an easier read than Alison Wertheimer's classic[†].

Wroblewski is dismissive of the suicide prevention movement and, perhaps in a desire to prevent self-blame, emphasises depression and mental sickness as the major causes of suicide. Having survived a suicide bereavement herself, her book carries a message of hope into what she sees as the doom and pessimism so often forecast for those who grieve following this particular form of bereavement. As she writes, 'ultimately it is not how they died, but that they died that is so terrible'.

Susan Wallbank
Bereavement Counsellor

[†] Wertheimer A. *A Special Scar*. London, UK: Routledge, 1991. Available from Cruse Bereavement Care, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond TW9 1UR, UK. £13.99pb.

BEREAVEMENT AND SUPPORT

Marylou Hughes. Washington, USA: Taylor and Francis, 1995. £19.95 pb.

Those new to group work will find this book particularly useful, although more experienced practitioners will also find it a good refresher and an opportunity to think again about different approaches.

Against a summary of theories of grief and bereavement, the author covers all major aspects which should be considered when working in bereavement groups. The reader is taken through some basic material – the benefits of bereavement groups, setting up, getting people to come, structured and unstructured groups – using an approach which is practical, rather than mainly theoretical. The many sub-headings, quotes from group members and copies of

handouts appropriate for some groups are helpful and the scope is wide including, for example, semi-educational groups with speakers and 'breakfast' groups for retired people.

Hughes writes in an American context (eg references) but his sound advice is pertinent to counsellors everywhere and his demystifying of the subject ensures the text is user-friendly and readable. With a limited range of writing on group-work and bereavement in the literature, this book makes a welcome addition by relating theory to practice so well.

David Olivere
Senior Lecturer in Social Work

VIDEO

'I Still Can't Believe it': basic communication skills for bereavement counselling.

David Cleverly, Lynn Franchino, Philippa Weitz. London, UK: St George's Hospital Medical School, 1995. £55.00 inc p&p†.

Aids to the teaching of communication skills are much needed and this video comes from a group of experienced and talented teachers. It is intended as the first of a series and deals only with the elementary skills: listening, empathy and body language; paraphrasing; reflecting feeling; integrating feelings and experience; clarifying; questions and probes; and summarising. Each is explained and then illustrated by scenes, showing good counselling and poor counselling. Viewers will have little difficulty in telling the difference.

The video runs for 26 minutes and is accompanied by a training guide which suggests how it can be used and provides a number of additional exercises and suggested role play situations. The whole programme is well produced, well organised and tightly scripted.

The basis problem with this, as with any similar video, is that of finding actors who can truly reproduce the verbal and non-verbal communications of real life. From the moment when the commentator steps primly from a wooded garden into the counselling room, this reviewer felt uncomfortable. They seemed to be saying the right things, yet I was constantly distracted by the artificiality of a situation in which it was obvious that everyone was reading lines. The only people who came across as natural were the 'good' counsellors.

What are the alternatives? Video tapes of real counselling would be ideal and, while there are ethical difficulties, these are not insuperable. It would, perhaps, be unfair to show examples of bad counselling, and educational psychologists claim that viewers easily find themselves modelling bad examples as well as good.

The guide suggests that the video 'may be helpful to trainers who feel

uncomfortable with role-play demonstrations' and it is certainly true that some teachers and trainees do feel self-conscious at exposing themselves in this way. Whether the use of this video will make it any easier I doubt. I would go as far as to say that these people should not be selected to teach communication skills and, among the trainees, there are usually one or two extroverts who are willing to 'break the ice'. One thing is for sure: we cannot teach communication skills without role play. In one evaluation of training students rated it as both the most painful and the most valuable part of the entire course. In my view no-one should become an accredited counsellor unless they have experienced in role play many of the life situations that they will have to face in counselling. No video can be a substitute and this one, while it is full of good ideas which may be useful to counsellors and trainees, should be seen as supplementing rather than replacing other methods of teaching.

Colin Murray Parkes
Consultant Psychiatrist

† Available from the St George's Hospital Academic Services Dept, Cranmer Terrace, London SW17 0RE.

ABSTRACTS

Death Education: a Model of Student-Participatory Learning

Heuser L. *Death Studies* 1995; 19 (6): 583-90.

The author, who teaches in the sociology department of a small liberal arts university in the USA, was asked by one of her students to initiate a course on dying, death and grieving. The students were encouraged to take an active part in formulating and running the course. The article is a clearly written, straightforward account of the methods adopted, the subjects discussed, and the nature of the students' participation. The project sounds an excellent one, giving the students a better and deeper appreciation of life and death, and likely to help them in any future experience of bereavement.

The Disenfranchised Grief of Teachers

Rowling L. *Omega* 1995; 31 (4): 317-29.

Based on research in two large schools in Australia, this article discusses loss and grief within a school community, especially in relation to the teachers' grief and the impact this has on their professional work. Teachers feel they need to fill three roles: to 'be human' in their relationships with their pupils and colleagues; to control their emotions; and to care for their charges. This leaves little room for expressing their own grief and sense of powerlessness in the face of traumatic events. The author believes that they have the

same need for a supportive structure as workers in other fields, such as the police and emergency services, and outlines how such a structure was provided in the schools where she carried out her research.

Predictors of Husbands' and Wives' Grief Reactions Following Infant Death: The Role of Marital Intimacy

Lang A, Gottlieb LN, Amsel R. *Death Studies* 1996; 20 (1): 33-57.

Grief at the loss of an infant can have long-term effects both on the quality of family life and on marital relationships. Husband and wife generally react differently to the death of a child, with the wife better able to express her grief and needing intellectual and emotional support, while the husband is more likely to suppress his sadness and anger and seek solace in sexual intimacy. The authors' findings suggest that the ability of couples to turn to their friends soon after their loss is an indication they will be able to work through their grief, and that skilled clinicians can help them to understand, anticipate and cope with their reactions. The article is repetitious and somewhat technical, but should certainly be of use to professionals faced with the task of helping bereaved couples.

Parent-Child Communication in Bereaved Israeli Families

Silverman PR, Weiner A, El Ad N. *Omega* 1995; 31 (4): 275-93.

This perceptive article discusses aspects of parent-child communication in Israel after one parent had died. The authors studied 23 surviving parents and their 43 children between the ages of six and 16 in an attempt to find out how the children coped. For historical reasons, death is a very real part of the societal fabric in Israel, but because of the cultural diversity of the population reactions to it differ greatly. The study found that most children accepted the death more easily if the surviving parent 'kept them in the picture': trying to protect them by not talking to them about their parent's illness and possible death was counter-productive. In general, the children were far more aware of what was happening than was believed, and were better able to come to terms with their loss whatever their cultural background.

Sheila Hodges and John Bush

OBE for Colin Murray Parkes

As we go to press, we are delighted to be able to report that Dr Murray Parkes has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his services to bereaved people.

New from SAGE

Counselling for Grief and Bereavement

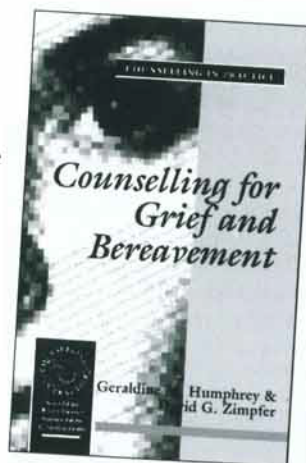
Geraldine M Humphrey and David G Zimpfer both Kent State University, Ohio

The ability to counsel people who have been bereaved or who have suffered a devastating loss is of vital importance to all those in the helping professions, calling upon a whole array of skills and knowledge.

This book, written by two experienced bereavement counsellors, provides a practical, accessible guide to this very important and specialized area of counselling. Geraldine Humphrey and David G Zimpfer take readers step-by-step through the counselling skills they need to work with their clients in a way which sensitively facilitates the process of grief, initiates healing and promotes a sense of growth. Carefully chosen case examples illustrate each step along the way, while specific attention is paid throughout the book to ethics and to the possible and realistic need for referral. Providing a firm theoretical base, the authors discuss the concepts and categories of attachment, loss and grief.

Humphrey and Zimpfer also focus on special areas where the resolution of grief can be more difficult, such as murder, suicide, AIDS or the early loss of a child, and, since some losses can be foretold, devote attention to anticipatory grief. Further chapters cover groupwork and community outreach services. Providing a sensitive and compassionate introduction to grief and bereavement counselling, this book will be of significant help to all trainees and practitioners in the helping professions.

Counselling in Practice series
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