

Primary school recommendations:

- to respond to the schools perceived training needs ;
- to prepare and circulate a help sheet of information;
- to establish a central resource bank.

Secondary school recommendations:

- to continue to respond to the training needs;
- to establish a resource centre from which schools can obtain material or seek help;
- to establish specialist help and support for schools having problems in this area.

It has not been possible as yet to resource all these recommendations. However, training courses on bereavement for teachers did take place in Humberside, and a help sheet was drawn up, giving a summary of the findings of the study, brief advice, and a contacts and book list, and

distributed to all schools in the county.

The author would like to gratefully acknowledge the help of Corrine Ludford of Bridlington School and co-researcher, Janis Hostad of Dove House Hospice, Hull, who inspired the primary study. He has also published a handbook for teachers, *Coping with Bereavement* (Cardiff, UK: Cardiff Academic Press, 1997) and is now training as an educational psychologist.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

The Reading Branch of Cruse Bereavement Care is looking for reports of feelings of euphoria – elation and a sense of well-being – following a death. The feelings may or may not be prolonged, may occur at any stage of bereavement, may perhaps be seen as incongruous or having a religious significance.

If you have encountered reactions of 'emotional excitement', we would be grateful if you would contact us. When we have added your instances to those from our branch of Cruse, we shall prepare a questionnaire for you in order to construct a general, more detailed picture. We should be pleased to receive data from any source, eg clients, friends and personal experiences. Of course, data will be entirely confidential and no names will be required.

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R E V I E W S

RESOURCE PACKS

THE GRIEF GAME

Yvonne Searly, Isabelle Strong.
London, UK: Jessica Kingsley, 1996.
Game and booklet: £38.18.

DEALING WITH BEREAVEMENT

Judith Green. Leicester, UK: Youth Work Press, 1995. Booklets and cards: £14.99.

FACING UP

St Catherine's Hospice. Preston, Lancs, UK, 1992. Video and package: £30.00.

LIFE GOES ON

St Margaret's Somerset Hospice. Taunton, Somerset, UK, 1995. Two videos: £58.75 each, £88.20 for both.

GRIEF, BEREAVEMENT AND CHANGE

Penny Casdagli, Francis Gobey.
Cambridge, UK: Daniels Publishing, 1994. Package: £39.95.

There comes a time for most of us, no matter how extensive our experience, when we need ideas and inspiration in our work. The five, quite different items here will, between them, be a valuable source of both these things for bereavement workers for many years to come.

The simplest, apparently, is *The Grief Game*, a therapeutic tool designed by clinical psychologists to help children and adolescents (six to 16 is the recommended age range) come to terms with bereavement. Anyone familiar with the *All about Me* game (Ilford, Essex, UK: Barnardos, 1992) will have some idea what this one is like. There is an attractive board with a start point, and shapes on which players can land, some of which lead to the turning over of a card to do with thoughts, wishes and dreams, or feelings or memories or facts. Each

card carries a question, for example: 'If you had a wish for your special person, what would it be? Does the pain of losing someone ever go away? Did the special person ever hug you?' They are not all emotion-laden – one asks how tall the special person was, another that the player find out what the other players are good at. Together they provide a wide range of topics for discussion using, in the words of the authors, an integrated psychotherapy model which incorporates systemic, cognitive-behavioural, humanistic and psychodynamic orientations. There is a brief but useful accompanying booklet. Highly recommended for therapists; others should approach with caution.

Dealing with Bereavement is for youth workers and others, helping them enable young people to express and explore their feelings on this subject. There are two booklets to set the scene and give suggestions for group work, and a set of cards to facilitate discussion, encourage role play and allow an exercise to be played out.

The introductory booklet covers much of the theory, with particular reference to adolescence. It provides a good start for someone coming fresh to the topic and the sections on religious beliefs and resources are most welcome. The second booklet contains a set of 10 exercises, or activities, which youth workers can carry out. The author is careful to spell out the limitations of what she is offering, but I would have welcomed a clearer indication of the need to debrief at the end of a session, and some suggestions on how this might be done. That apart, this could be a valuable resource for teachers in secondary

schools, as well as youth workers.

Facing Up is a video about a young man who is killed while riding a motor bike, with a set of notes, worksheets and information sheets for teachers. The declared purpose is to challenge young people in their mid-teens with the implications of bereavement. The 25-minute video is well made, and should certainly set the scene effectively. The materials are devised for a session each week for six or seven weeks. There is factual information, a section on emotions and finally a move to bring in other losses, including moving house, divorce and other separations.

The background of the video, and to some extent the package, is Christian and children of other faiths, or those who have none, may find it hard to identify with what is portrayed. However, teachers do not have to follow the package as though it were a cook book. Of all the approaches reviewed here, this is the most school-like, in that there are many suggestions for discussions and a lot of questions to put to children. It is well worth looking at, although some of the material may need to be adapted.

The training video, *Life Goes on*, from St Margaret's hospice comes in a 15 and a 30-minute version. Both contain the same basic material: an account by four girls aged between 14 and about 20 of the death of a parent and how they have, or have not, coped. With admirable candour they talk of their immediate responses, the way their school or college behaved, the part played by friends and counsellors. They articulate their regrets and give example upon example of ways in which they have come to terms with

their loss. Both contain the same stories, but the longer version has more detail and if only one could be bought, this is the one to go for. There appears to be no accompanying literature which is a shame since many of the ideas expressed, even in the longer version, could bear discussion. Although called training videos, either could be used with a youth group to illustrate points, although there is far too much material to show either of them all at once.

The Neti-Neti Theatre Company was founded in 1987 and since then has made a name for itself by producing theatre for young people which is, in their words, challenging and accessible. Having seen two of their performances, I can vouch for that, and would add that when they have dealt with death, they have reached deep emotional levels as well. Their pack, *Grief, Bereavement and Change*, consists of detailed notes for five workshops for young people, with sections on further reading and contact addresses. A video, *Grief**, is available separately from Neti-Neti and may be used with the pack.

There is an enormous range of ideas and of topics touched upon, with the underlying aim of opening up issues and making it safe to talk about them. The workshops are designed to run over five weeks but there is more than enough material in each to extend over a longer period. The authors are careful in their background discussion to emphasise the need to be aware of the structure of group work, the need, for example, to warm up first and to debrief at the end.

The contents of the workshops are in many ways different from the other