

of many types of life event which create a major discrepancy between our assumptive world, the world which we assume to exist on the basis of our experience, and the real world with which we are now confronted. Countless habits of thought and behaviour which involve the person we love must be identified and their continued relevance examined. Memories, ideas and plans which have continued relevance may take on added value now that the person we love is gone. Those which are now irrelevant, painful or misleading must be recognised and tagged as danger areas to be avoided when possible. It is this process that I have termed psycho-social transition¹⁵. Viewed in this way, 'grief work' is the process by which we slowly and painfully construct a new relationship with the dead and a new view of ourselves and our world. We do this, not by forgetting the past but by reconstructing it. This is the focus of Klass, Silverman and Nickman's recent book *Continuing Bonds*¹⁶.

Problems emerge when bereaved people cling to the past, continuing to utilise models of the world that are obsolete. Conversely they may also arise when people bury their treasure, turning their back on the past in an attempt to avoid the pain of remembrance. In either case they may need help and encouragement to review what has

happened and discover new perspectives. These approaches will be familiar to people trained in cognitive therapies.

WORKING WITH NEW IDEAS

Metals are refined by heating them in the fire and beating them and it is often hard for the researchers who have rough-hewn theories out of the bare rock to see them hammered into shape by others. This said, we still have much to learn and it is encouraging to see others emerging whose ideas add to our understanding. Some ideas from the past will, no doubt, have to go by the board, but I am confident that the basic foundation is secure and that new thinkers such as Margaret Stroebe and Tony Walter will continue the process of refinement. **BC**

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NEWS AND VIEWS

OPINION

Expression or repression?

Emotional reserve and the English way of grief

In *The Unknown Country: Death in Australia, Britain and the USA**, Tony Walter describes English people as reserved, and expected to conceal their emotions. Traditional rituals following death once provided a framework within which it was acceptable for the English to express emotions openly but, now these traditions have weakened, the result is confusion among the bereaved who find that the expectation of emotional reserve forbids any public display of grief.

This attitude is now being revised in some quarters, in the belief that the expression of grief is a healthier reaction. But, Walters contends, this has also left people confused: expressivists see displaying feelings of grief as natural and the repression of tears as harmful, yet public situations are not natural but are governed by social rules. As a result many people find it difficult to know how to grieve in a way that is socially acceptable.

Sheila Hodges and John Bush

* Charmaz K, Howarth G, Kellehear A (eds). *The Unknown Country: Death in Australia, Britain and the USA*. London, UK: Macmillan, 1997.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Aspects of Family Grief. 26 September 1998. Manchester Area Bereavement Forum Fifth Annual Conference; keynote speaker, Kevin Kendrick. Denton, Tameside, UK. Enquiries ☎ 0161 371 8860.

A Child's Grief - Someone Has Died. 9 October 1998 in London; 12 October 1998 in Edinburgh, UK. One-day conferences held by The Child Bereavement Trust and Winston's Wish; speakers, William Worden, Julie Stokes, Jenni Thomas. For further information contact Woods Ruinard, 71 Cambridge Road, London SW20 0PX. ☎ 0181 879 7688.

Mental Health Afternoon Seminars convened by Mole Conferences. 16 October 1998, *Dealing with Grief and Anger in Grief*; speaker, Lyn Franchino. 20 November 1998, *Counselling the Difficult Patient* (includes pathological grief); speaker, Gillian McGauley. 5 March 1999, *Youth Suicide*; speaker, Simon Armson. 16 March 1999, *Children, the Family and Grief*; speaker, Atle Dyregrov. London, UK. Details from: Philippa Weitz, Mole House, 47 Tidy Street, Brighton BN1 4EL. ☎ 01273 24 26 34.

New Horizons in Hospice Care. 2-4 June 1999. Asia Pacific Hospice Conference. Hong Kong. Contact the Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care Ltd. GPO Box 13772, Hong Kong. ☎ (852) 2868 1211.

CRUSE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

September 16-18 1998
The Hayes Conference Centre
Swanwick, Derybshire

TRANSITIONS

Keynote speakers to include

Jonathan Dollimore

Author of Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture

Josie Gregory

Parallel processes of personal and organisational change

Workshops - on the effect of transitions on bereaved people, and Cruse workers both as individuals and members of an organisation
- on counselling for loss by

Bill Merrington, Alison Wertheimer, Richard Lansdown, Alide Gersie, Fiona Cathcart

Presentation on the new Strategic Plan for Cruse, followed by group discussions

Further details from the Training Department, Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond TW9 1UR, Surrey, UK.

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