

This is a useful book for all those involved in the education system, not least because Holland clearly identifies the size of the population of bereaved children and follows their experiences through to adulthood.

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A STUDENT DIES, A SCHOOL MOURNS

Ralph Klicker
New York/London: Brunner-Routledge, 1999, 143pp.
£13.95 pb. ISBN 1 560 32742 1

Schools can make a difference to the grieving process. The message of this book is that they should provide direction, structure and support for dealing with death and can only do this well if there is an appropriate planned strategy: death affects all schools at some time. In *A Student Dies, a School Mourns* teaching staff will find the advice they need on setting up a crisis response team, including roles for many liaison people, such as family and media liaison, as well as the school social worker, nurse, librarian, support staff and others connected to the school.

Klicker gives detailed guidance on practical matters, and his information on factors affecting grief and age-related responses to death make this book great value as a reference source. There are sections on practical matters, such as helping grieving pupils and teaching them how to behave in grief-related situations (towards friends, parents, teachers, and returning grieving teachers or classmates). There is also advice on dealing with suicide, funerals, condolence letters, helping yourself through grief and coping with violent death, including murder.

The author is American and there are references to aspects of schools that are perhaps more particular to that country, for example, the availability of school counsellors and a more endemic level of violence, but the book would still have value to schools everywhere. In the UK, it would not replace other guidance already sent to all schools here: *Wise before the Event* by William Yule and Ann Gold (London: Gulbenkian Foundation, 1993).

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MANAGING LOSS, SEPARATION AND BEREAVEMENT

Best Policy and Practice

Brenda Mallon
Manchester, UK: Education Matters, 1999, 60pp.
£25.00 pb. ISBN 1 904 08400 1

Brenda Mallon's slim volume offers useful guidance to teachers on how to manage an individual pupil's bereavement or a critical

incident within the school community. She emphasises the need to prepare for and establish a planned response that acknowledges personal strengths and preferences within the staff group. This principle of using the staff group is embodied in her argument that the subject of death needs to be incorporated into the school curriculum from reception class onwards. She outlines how this can be achieved

by integrating topics into existing lessons and provides some exercises which are appropriate for the classroom.

Mallon attempts to cover a wide range of issues, all of which are pertinent to her central theme. She draws our attention to the secondary losses children experience and how these more discreet losses can have a significant effect upon already vulnerable children. She

WEB WATCH

Internet resources for work with bereaved parents

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Searching for sites for bereaved parents and their helpers, I was faced with a huge array of choices. However, it soon became apparent that although there are a number of excellent international sites for parents, fewer offer support to those working with this client group. Of those that do, many focus on specific types of bereavement, such as sudden infant death or miscarriage. Here I have picked out two sites of wider relevance which not only consider issues arising from many types of child death but also include a variety of good resources.

The Compassionate Friends (TFC) is an international organisation created for and by bereaved parents and their helpers, with strong links in the USA and a number of web sites worldwide. Many of these do little more than give contact details for local support groups, but the **UK site** at www.tcf.org.uk provides much more, including a useful range of resources for those involved in bereavement work. Helpful links, a translation facility, and clear and easy navigation help to make it very user-friendly. With over 6,000 visitors per month, this popular site conveys a sense of community and clearly provides a lifeline for many bereaved parents.

A range of interesting **leaflets** is available at the site. Some are written specifically for those involved in bereavement work and explore best practice. Others, looking at different aspects of loss, help to explain and normalise the grief process. Single copies can be printed directly, free of charge. (Click on 'publications', then on 'leaflets' to view.)

An unusual and valuable feature for those supporting the bereaved is access to the organisation's **postal lending library**. Containing over a thousand books, audio and videotapes it is claimed to be the largest of its kind in the UK. Many sites provide resources for sale but few offer items on loan or at such reasonable rates. There are also details of their **telephone helpline**, offering support and information to anyone working with this particular client group.

Bereaved parents can submit creative writing, support each other by **email**, and express their loss freely at a very poignant section of the site called the **Meeting Point**.

There is also a **chat room** facility, (run from the USA), with separate rooms available for parents wishing to discuss different aspects of loss. These rooms appear to be well monitored, with clear ground rules regarding use. In most areas, bereaved parents and their families can be put in contact with local TCF befrienders and support groups.

The central **USA site** also provides some useful written articles, similar to the leaflets on the UK site with, in addition, suggestions for medical personnel and first responders, and an exploration of common grief reactions experienced by siblings. For a complete list of all TFC sites, visit www.compassionatefriends.org/links.shtml

Click on 'brochures' to view these articles.

Another useful site at www.childbereavement.org.uk is that of **The Child Bereavement Trust**, a UK national charity founded in 1994 by bereavement facilitator and trainer, Jenni Thomas, who has many years of experience in the health service and is widely recognised as a pioneer in family bereavement care. Jenni's aim in creating this site is to improve the support offered by professionals to grieving families.

Brief details of a number of **resources** produced by the Trust, including training videos, memory boxes, workbooks and audiotapes, appear on the site. Those working with younger members of the family may be particularly interested in the interactive materials. All resources may be purchased online. Several **articles** are included exploring common grief reactions and best practice in supporting the bereaved within a hospital, school or family environment. The site also provides some written material for young people themselves, including the full text of the Trust's booklet, *A Teenage Guide to Coping with Bereavement*.

A recently created **telephone helpline** for those working with the bereaved appears to be proving popular. For contact details click on 'Latest News', then on 'Information and Support'. Finally, the site includes updated information about training programmes and initiatives provided by the Trust, some of which have been approved by the UK Department of Health. 