

The Association for Death Education and Counseling (Hartford, CT, USA)

Kathleen G Moore PhD LMHC CT
President of ADEC

The Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) is a multi-disciplinary professional organisation dedicated to promoting excellence in death education, bereavement counselling and care of the dying. Based on theory and quality research, ADEC provides information, support and resources to its multicultural membership and, through them, to the public. Founded in 1976, today ADEC is a 1700-member organisation. Its aims have remained the same throughout but, over the years, it has been possible to develop increasingly sophisticated ways of achieving these goals.

ADEC set up its first professional certification programme in 1981 to serve the needs of consumers and provide standards of quality. Recently we have created a new professional certification programme and, as I write, the first exam is being conducted. The new qualification, Certified in Thanatology: Death, Dying and Bereavement (CT), represents our efforts to recognise practitioners and educators in the discipline of thanatology. The CT indicates a mastery of a core body of knowledge in both death education and bereavement counselling that has been developed by topic experts. Candidates have met criteria that include either a Bachelor's degree and two years of verified related experience, or a Master's or Doctorate degree and one year of verified related experience. Finally, candidates must accumulate 60 hours of education in thanatology. Certification will continue to raise professional standards, enhance career opportunities and protect the public by enabling clients to identify qualified practitioners in the field.

Educational opportunities abound in ADEC. The annual conference, which has been running for 25 years, now offers keynote addresses, panels, invited speakers and concurrent workshops in a learning environment dedicated to professionals. Prior to the conference, we run training sessions taught by leading experts in the field. Moreover, we have developed and produced three CD-ROM programmes in the areas of children's grief, psychosocial issues in children and adolescents with terminal illness, and adolescent suicide. The CD-ROM format makes these programmes readily available to members and other professionals, offering continuing education opportunities.

ADEC also offers a number of networking benefits to its membership. Our Human

Resource Network lists the names of members in every state of the USA and some foreign countries. Special interest groups offer support and information about specific areas such as violence, trauma and spiritual care. A mentor program and 'International Buddy' service assist with introductions inside ADEC and abroad. Eager, talented and dedicated students are encouraged and nurtured by ADEC through annual awards of excellence, for which candidates compete by writing papers. Undergraduates and graduates enter separately for an award in each category, and a third is offered to all levels of student for a paper dedicated to cross-cultural and individual differences in ways of dealing with dying and death.

At ADEC, we seek to foster our members' ability to understand world views through our Multicultural Committee and People of Colour Forum. With a growing multicultural membership, we are lucky to have people from diverse

backgrounds who are active in promoting understanding, education and support of all races and cultures.

Finally, the ADEC newsletter, *The Forum*, has grown into a themed publication of articles that serve to educate and inform on all issues related to dying, death and bereavement. Recent issues offered insights into grief and loss in the workplace, grandparent's grief, and support for grieving children and adolescents.

As ADEC has matured as a professional organisation, it has retained that special essence of its origins - the warm, caring atmosphere and collegiate relationships shared by its members working to provide support to the dying and the bereaved. It offers a 'home' to thanatology educators, practitioners, and researchers. Shirley Scott, a long-time member noted: 'In ADEC, I have grown up professionally over the past 26 years with the assistance of many leaders in the field. ADEC provided me with opportunities to learn from the best, validate what I learned on my own, share my expertise with newcomers, and forge many warm and lasting friendships'.

To contact ADEC, write to 342 North Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06117-2507, USA; ☎ (001) 860 586-7533; website www.adec.org. ☐

BOOK REVIEWS

GRIEF, MOURNING AND DEATH RITUAL

Jenny Hockey, Jeanne Katz, Neil Small (eds)
Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2001, pp. 286, £21.99 pb ISBN 0335 20501 1

This edited collection brings together critical discussion of psychological theories of grief with anthropological and sociological studies. It attempts to break down the distinction between grief as an inner emotion and mourning as socially required behaviour.

There are three sections: on grief, on mourning, and on funeral and commemorative rites. Each section starts with a substantial critical and theoretical review, followed by short easy-to-read empirical chapters on topics such as grief in an old person's home, supporting bereaved children at school, grief in the coroner's inquest, emotional aspects of staffing the Child Death Helpline, the language of bereavement care, changes in the funeral industry, and the effects of mobility on Hindu death rituals. This brings into focus sites of mourning too often ignored - the school, the old people's home, the inquest, the cemetery. In so doing it brings together the inner world of feelings and the very material world of grave inscriptions, crematoria, and school classrooms.

Readers of *Bereavement Care* may want to pick and choose which chapters to read.

Overall, the book gives a good feel for recent sociological and anthropological research into bereavement, and has similarities with Sheila Payne and Sandra Hall's *Loss and Bereavement*¹ and my own *On Bereavement*². As an edited collection, this new book is both more varied and more fragmented. For example, the editors' desire to use Michel Foucault to understand grief is not really followed through. ☐

Tony Walter

Course Director in Death and Society

1. Payne S, Horn S (eds). *Loss and Bereavement*. Maidenhead, UK: OUP, 1999.

2. Walter T. *On Bereavement - The Culture of Grief*. Maidenhead, UK: OUP, 1999.

ADVANCE NOTICE

International Conference

The 7th International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society will be hosted by Cruse Bereavement Care

on 12-15 July 2005
at King's College, London

Further information to follow

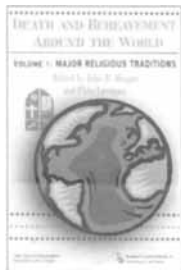
The cosmology of life and death

DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT AROUND THE WORLD

Vol I: Major Religious Traditions

John Morgan, Pittu Launghani (eds)

Amityville, New York: Baywood, 2002, 206pp. \$44.95 hb,
ISBN 0 895 03272 4; \$33.95 pb, ISBN 0 89503 273 2



Dying perhaps creates the most insurmountable barriers of understanding between cultures and peoples. Yet death and grief are common, universal human experiences irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, class or wealth. We all die; the majority of us unexpectedly or before we are ready, leaving behind some who will mourn our loss. But the cosmology of life and death, the stories and beliefs which underpin these eternal cycles are manifold, diverse and particular to groups and communities. Living on the same streets of British cities, are families whose understanding of death and rituals of grieving are so different that even neighbourly condolences prove to be massively confusing and at times offensive. Flowers arriving at a house of mourning can cause anguish for some grieving Muslims, for example.

This is why this book, the first in a five-volume series, is invaluable. With so many diverse peoples now sharing countries, cities and continents, it is an inescapable responsibility for global citizens to learn about each other and share these most poignant of moments of life. I never knew how Greek Orthodox people view death. I now know a little after reading the brilliantly written and illustrated chapter by John Chirban in this collection.

My only serious reservation about such 'guides' is that readers may assume cultures are unchanging or that 15 pages is all it takes to know 'outsiders'. They encourage the idea that communities operate as a collective, thus denying that profoundly important human right – individuality. In a mixed race families, for example, death brings many tensions as original families may reclaim the body to take it back to its 'pure' roots, while partners and children may want to mark their created, joint cultural identity which is the antithesis of homogeneity.

The editors are explicitly aware of these

dangers, which is good, but readers may not be. Nevertheless, this is an important contribution to the new world order where we have to know

more than ever before just to be decent citizens.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown
Columnist and broadcaster



W E B W A T C H

Worldwide mourning customs

Susan Ahluwalia DipHSW
Adviser and Trainer in Social Care

Since most countries now contain a number of ethnic and religious groups, it is increasingly important to be aware of the customs of other communities. With this in mind, I have reviewed websites that outline the mourning practices of some of the major religions, though there is such a great range of beliefs within each faith that it is unlikely that any site will represent all the views of a tradition.

The Muslim Students' Association at Houston University, part of the USA Muslim Students' Association, has created a site www.uh.edu/campus/msa which publishes extensive information about the beliefs and practices of their community. Mourning customs are described in the **Articles** sub-site (you may need to access this directly by searching for www.uh.edu/campus/msa/articles). Under Janaza (funeral prayers) in the alphabetical listing of articles is a general description of funeral practices. More information is included in a long, question-and-answer article on *fatawas* (religious decrees) for women; apparently many of these apply to men too. Click on Fatawawom and then Contents and look at Sections 6, 'Questions related to funerals' and 13, 'Questions related to the waiting period (*Iddah*) and mourning'. The answers challenge some of the common myths about mourning customs, eg that women should wail over the deceased, by citing religious sources. In this case the quote suggests that wailing actually 'punishes' the dead.

There are a particularly wide range of beliefs and practices in **Hinduism**, but a good account of death and mourning rituals can be read at www.beliefnet.com Beliefnet is a huge American site set up by an independent multi-faith e-community with links to numerous **articles** and **features** about Hinduism and other religions. Use the **search engine** on the home page to find the article, 'Rites of Transition: Hindu death rituals', excerpted from *Hinduism Today*, or click on the link to read the whole article.

Articles on **Sikh** funeral ceremonies can be found at www.allaboutsikhs.com The home page has a link to funeral ceremonies, accessed by typing these words into the **search engine** near the foot of the home page. The **article** here covers the burial rites and provides a comprehensive description of the steps that follow, including prayers, music, food, gifts and donations for charities

and religious organisations.

The **Buddhist** information and education network at www.buddhanet.net also has an excellent search engine, sited at the top of its home page. Again, inputting 'funeral ceremonies' brings up a wealth of **information** about all aspects of bereavement in Buddhist culture. For an overview, click on the **Site Map**. It is interesting to note that Buddhists make efforts to 'banish sorrow, loneliness and the fear of spirits by means of music and fellowship'.

The site of the Shaarey Zedek congregation in Michigan, USA, www.shaareyzedek.org, provides guidance on the rules and practices of traditional **Judaism**, with links to other Jewish sites. The **Bereavement Guide** can be accessed from the home page via the Guides and Pamphlets button. This explains stages of the bereavement process, one of which is *Kaddish*, a prayer recited by mourners three times a day for a year after burial, an 'act of looking to the future and all of life with faith and hope, in the presence of grief and despair'. It seems there is plenty of practical and spiritual support for mourners throughout the bereavement process.

Finally, an unusual website, <http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu>, run by a quarterly **ecumenical** journal, *Theology Today*, publishes **articles** on a **wide range of classical and contemporary theological issues**. (NB you need to type in the address as it appears above, omitting the usual [www](http://).) I was particularly interested in the article concerning a **Hindu-Christian funeral** in Bangalore. Access this by clicking on 'locate' and typing in 'Hindu-Christian funeral'. The dead man, a Hindu, had married a Christian woman, and his funeral was in two parts, reflecting his link to both faiths. Neither Hindus nor Christians regard death as final, rather as a 'deliverance or transition or passage into the mystery of life', but the author ponders on whether the deceased's destiny will be affected by the performance of the two different death rites. He comments that he was pleased to see Christians and Hindus interacting as, in India, the distance between the Temple and Church is 'almost unbridgeable'. You can learn a great deal about a range of thematic issues on this fascinating site by clicking on the Focus Themes button on the home page, or by surfing previous editions through the Explore Archives button.

Resources and learning disability

TALKING TOGETHER ABOUT DEATH

Joan Cooley, Frankie McGauran
Bicester, Oxon, UK: Winslow, 2000, 111 cards. £52.82. ISBN 0 86388 265 X

This box set of photo-realistic drawings is described as a 'resource pack... specifically designed for families and carers to share the experience of death and bereavement with those with learning disabilities'. The drawings are divided into five sections: the life cycle, the different ways that death happens, rituals of mourning, feelings and emotions, and how to help yourself to cope with the emotions associated with bereavement. A booklet offers general guidance for families and carers and specific exposition of the content.

To review this resource I showed the picture cards to a number of people with learning disabilities and had varied responses. Those with mild learning disabilities had no difficulty in describing the content of most of the pictures, but at times found the abstract meaning of a sequence of images difficult to grasp. For example, the opening selection from the set focuses on the life cycle of a bird, showing a birds nest containing eggs, a chick hatching, an adult bird feeding some chicks, an adult bird alone and, finally, a bird lying dead in front of a cat. People I asked found it difficult to make the connection between these pictures and, in all but one instance, did not realise that the bird with the cat was in fact dead.

People with more severe learning disabilities had additional problems in deciphering the pictures. Whilst

beautifully crafted, these black and white images are often overly detailed and not bold enough for this purpose. As the pack is intended for shared usage, a parent or carer could explain or prompt discussion, but this is not empowering for the person with learning disabilities since the very thing being used to support them is inaccessible to them.

Tools to help people with learning disabilities understand and cope with significant and difficult events in life are extremely important, so it seems improper to be overly critical of this one. There are some meaningful features, not least the consistent depiction of ethnic diversity and rituals of mourning from a variety of cultures. The card format is useful allowing a few pictures at a time to be selected, depending on individual need or interest. Notwithstanding these positive features, the principal problem with this pack is that people with learning disabilities do not appear to have been consulted about its content at the developmental stage. Had this been done a more accessible product might have emerged.

Sandra Dowling
Researcher in Bereavement and Learning Disability

LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT


Siri and Michelle Persaud
Chesham, Bucks, UK: Wordsmith, 2002, 62pp. £26.00

Loss and Bereavement has two functions. Its main use is as a guide for carers and it begins with an introduction to the grief

process using stages of grieving. This straightforward and simple way of understanding grief reactions works quite well in this context, though this model has more recently been superseded by others, such as the dual process'.

The pack is also intended as a resource for direct use with people who have learning disabilities. Many pages include symbols or pictures to reinforce clear and simple text, though some include too much information so that it is not always obvious when a page is designed for carers and when it is intended for someone with a learning disability. The convenient, loose-leaf format means that specific pages may be taken out and used on their own.

The pack's main strengths are the colour photographs and its multi-cultural coverage. The photographs show important components of funerals, such as a coffin and an urn, and also a wide range of places of worship. The section on different faiths and cultures is really informative and one of the most comprehensive and accessible I have seen.

There are not many other packs of this nature but the most obvious comparison would be with *Understanding Grief*², a longer and more comprehensive teaching resource which includes a video, but which is far more expensive. At £26.00, the Persauds' pack is very affordable. 

Noelle Blackman
Dramatherapist and Senior practitioner

1. Stroebe M, Schut H. The dual process model of coping with bereavement. *Death Studies* 1999; 23: 197-224.
2. Hollins S, Sireling L. *Understanding Grief*. Brighton, UK: Pavilion, 1999.

Roos defines chronic sorrow as a recurring grief response to a living loss, such as severe developmental disability, persisting mental and physical impairment (eg schizophrenia, stroke, AIDS etc). She believes that chronic sorrow is a factor which often goes unrecognised, except perhaps at the point when an initial medical diagnosis is made. Chronic sorrow is felt by both the person suffering a persisting loss – 'self-loss' – and those people who make up their relationship world – 'other-loss'.

The author brings together her professional experience as a psychotherapist and her personal experience of chronic sorrow to address this hitherto neglected topic. The book, in its encyclopaedic breadth and depth, gives a historical overview and a life-span perspective on chronic sorrow. Roos' analysis of the issues provides theoretical clarity against which the integrated case vignettes add human and compassionate insights. These then form the basis for further discussion about professional approaches to the support and treatment of people dealing with chronic sorrow.

While this may not be immediately relevant for many practitioners working exclusively with people following a bereavement, it is a timely introduction to a wider view of grief which needs to include the running wound of chronic sorrow. I recommend it especially for those in nursing, medicine and palliative care for whom the encounter with chronic sorrow is most pertinent.

Linda Machin
Honorary Research Fellow

LIVING VICTIMS, STOLEN LIVES

Brad Stetson
Amityville, USA: Baywood, 2003, 136pp. \$34.95 hb; \$25.95 pb. ISBN 0 89503 229 5; 089503 230 9

Dr Stetson has a doctorate in social ethics from the University of Southern California and works as an associate professor of political science at Azusa Pacific University in California. This book is about the impact of the murder of a child (young or adult) on their wider family. He draws his text mainly from the words of others – the parents themselves, the pastors who care for them, the executive director of a large voluntary organisation in the USA, Parents of Murdered Children, and others who have written on the subject.

What Stetson has contributed is polemical – he writes from a very political right-wing and Christian viewpoint and does not examine the

BOOKS

PERSPECTIVES ON LOSS AND TRAUMA

John Harvey
Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage Publications, 2001, 318pp. £31.00pb. ISBN 0 761 92161 3

This book sets out to give a general survey of work on loss and trauma, taking a broad view of its nature and consequences. There are chapters on the death of loved ones, divorce, illness and injury, unemployment and homelessness, suicide, the ageing process, violence and war, the holocaust and genocide, therapeutic approaches and personal adjustment.

The author is an American social psychologist with extensive experience of teaching undergraduate students – for

whom this book has been written. It provides a basic general introduction to the topic, is easy to read, and illustrated with numerous examples of individual experiences. However, readers from other countries will find the author's perspective particularly American and adult-focused.

For me, there were some important gaps. For example, clinical issues are largely beyond the scope of this book, as are references to different models of loss and trauma. Children were discussed very little; schoolyard and drive-by shootings are briefly considered, but this section lacks references even to the work of leading American authors such as Robert Pynoos and Lenore Terr. The false memory syndrome controversy is mentioned briefly, but does not refer the

interested reader to the authoritative reports by the American Psychological Association or the British Psychological Society. The section on war lacks consideration of the issues relating to refugees, exile and migration which confront the European clinician.

Guinevere Tufnell
Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

CHRONIC SORROW

Susan Roos
New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2002, 269pp. £17.95 pb. ISBN 1 58391 321 1

The topic of this book should not be confused with the concept of chronic grief in classic bereavement literature, where it is synonymous with a pathological variation in mourning. Susan

BOOKS

international research literature. For example, in his 'modest proposals' for dealing with the increase in the murder rate in the USA (it has actually declined slightly in the last few years but is still shockingly high) he suggests that the length of the sentences should be increased and that this will act as a deterrent. Sentences for murder in the USA are vastly longer than those in the UK, yet the murder rate in the UK proportionate to the population is a tenth of that in the USA. He dismisses the suggestion that controlling the distribution of guns would make a difference, opining rather sententiously that it is people who kill, not guns. Instead he indicts five factors – the culture of anger, the culture of death, the glamorisation of homicide, the information industry, and fatherlessness.

Unfortunately he does not quote research sources for these statements, tending to go to secondary sources and newspaper reports and, whilst we can be sympathetic to many of the points he makes, the research evidence is much more complex and equivocal than he asserts. What he finds difficult to accept is that if someone is in a rage and has a gun in his hand, his rage will more likely result in death or serious maiming than if the rage erupts when he is bare-handed.

The main value of this book to readers of this journal is the interviews with parents. Five sets of parents, all from California, most of adolescent or adult children, talk about the effect on them and their families of the murder. One is the manslaughter of a 34-year-old son by his wife. Some of the suggestions for how friends can help support the survivors are of practical help. These sections can be recommended to parents of a murdered child of any age who need to feel that others can understand and share their painful experiences, and to those close to them.

Dora Black

Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

WRAPPED IN MOURNING

The gift of life and organ donation

Sue Holtkamp

New York: Brunner Routledge, 2002, 218pp. £16.95

Human organ transplant technology depends on the unconditional gift of a donor's organ/s, usually following a sudden and traumatic death. The donor's next-of-kin are not expected to show any

objection to the dissection of the body once brain-stem testing has certified death. Relatives must accept that the bodily functions of the donor will be maintained on ventilatory support until the organs are removed. This non-traditional way to die can challenge the donating family's understanding that this functioning body is legally dead. Coupled with the often difficult decisions about donation, and with issues about relinquishing attachment to the donated part of the loved one that 'lives on', organ donor families are at high risk for aberrant bereavement.

Holtkamp's book is therefore a much-needed addition to specialist bereavement literature, as yet unrivalled in the marketplace. However, she writes from her own phenomenological experience of being a grief therapist and educator engaging with donor families, and her book is a practical manual for those supporting them in their bereavement. While she draws upon North American research to give credence to her arguments, she fails to include a number of important British and European studies, and the solely American context of the book may be inappropriate for other settings.

Wrapped in Mourning is well written and will be a useful background for individuals with an interest in the field, but those searching for a strong, theoretical, contemporary, research-based undergirding will be disappointed. **BC**

Magi Sque

University Senior Lecturer

ABSTRACTS

Bereaved parents' outcomes 4 to 60 months after their children's deaths by accident, suicide, or homicide: a comparative study demonstrating differences

Murphy SA, Johnson LC, Wu L, Fan JJ, Lohan J. *Death Studies* 2003; **27**(1): 39-61

Among the youth and young adult population of the USA, accident, homicide or suicide account for 80% of all deaths. It is estimated that about 80,000 parents are bereaved each year by such deaths, yet little is known about their adjustment over time. Some people claim that the death of a child by homicide is the most traumatic bereavement possible, others that bereavement by suicide is the hardest to accept. The aim of this study was to discover whether one cause of a child's death influences parents' outcomes more than another, and to what extent there is improvement with the passing of time.

Nearly 70% of parents reported that it took from three to four years to put their child's death into perspective, and that it was this, rather than the cause of death, which most significantly influenced their adjustment.

Testing the grief to personal growth model using structural equation modeling

Hogan NS, Schmidt LA. *Death Studies* 2002; **26**(8): 615-634

The belief that loss can result in growth has been hypothesised for centuries. Hogan's Grief to Personal Growth model represents one emergent perspective of the qualitative changes resulting from the loss of a loved one. The model delineates a pathway through grief which indicates that the bereaved experience despair and detachment followed by intrusive thoughts and later by avoidance of intense preoccupation with grief. Social support is shown to help the bereft as they reconstruct their lives. A second path indicates that some bereaved individuals need help to proceed towards growth. The model was tested in a sample of bereaved parents using structural equation modelling as a method of theory-testing. The results are presented within a framework of theory-testing as a mechanism to bridge the gaps between theory, practice and research. Implications for practice are considered. This article is a useful contribution to our understanding of the process of 'reconstruction'.

Notifying individual students of a death loss: practical recommendations for schools and school counselors

Servaty-Seib HL, Peterson J, Spang D. *Death Studies* 2003; **27**(2): 167-186

Although a growing body of literature is focused on child and adolescent grief, less information addresses the needs of school communities with regard to death. This article provides practical recommendations for schools and school counsellors who are faced with telling students of the death of someone close, especially a parent. There are also specific suggestions about to the who, when, where and how of notification. The authors stress the need for school personnel to be educated in how to deal with such situations. They should be aware that the grief symptoms may not begin to emerge until as long as two years after the loss of a parent, and that the grieving may be of greater intensity

and longer duration than that of adults. Although some of the article may have relevance only for the USA – such as the ethical code governing privacy and the role of the school counsellor – in general it should be a useful guide, especially in relation to the need for sensitivity and understanding on the part of the school staff.

'Fret no more my child... for I'm all over heaven in a day': religious beliefs in the bereavement of African American, middle-aged daughters coping with the death of an elderly mother

Smith SH. *Death Studies* 2002; **26**(4): 309-323

This article examines the ways in which the religious beliefs of 30 African American, middle-aged women helped them to cope with the deaths of their elderly mothers. The study found that the women used their belief to move through stages of grief that allowed them to prepare, relinquish control, accept death, and maintain a connection with their mothers beyond death. Themes identified in the study include a belief in the existence of an afterlife where family members would be reunited. The author also stresses the way in which religious beliefs helped the bereaved daughters to cope with the tasks of living in the present while keeping a tie with their mothers which served to enhance both their belief and their fortitude in daily living. As the author points out, however, the study is limited by several factors.

Reconstructing the language of death and grief

Hedtke L. *Illness, Crisis & Loss* 2002; **10**(4): 285-293

The author of this article, a clinical social worker with a special interest in death and bereavement, disagrees with the theory that the finality of death is mediated by the idea of a need to progress through a series of stages or tasks until the bereaved finally come to terms with their loss and 'move on in life'. Instead, she adopts an approach which is more in keeping with current thinking about continuing bonds, encouraging the bereaved to perpetuate the relationship by talking about their dead loved ones and remembering them through, for instance, rituals and celebrations for holidays and anniversaries. 'To know that they will not be forgotten is a source of peace for the dying as well as for the living.' **BC**

Sheila Hodges and John Bush