

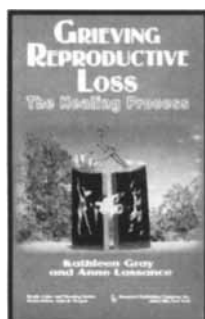
B O O K S

good practice. Although published by the Association for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the book is recommended for those of all religious persuasions and none.

Grieving Reproductive Loss

The healing process

Kathleen Gray, Anne Lassance



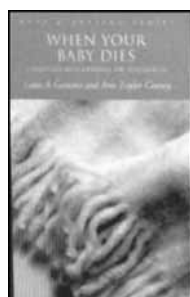
Amityville, New York
Baywood, 2003
219pp
\$45.95 hb
0-89503-227-9

This book covers similar ground to Bruce Pierce's *Miscarriage and Stillbirth*, and in addition, such topics as giving up a child for adoption, termination of pregnancy, and sudden infant death. There are descriptions of the tasks of mourning and, correctly, the authors stress the importance of asking for a history of other losses, especially all reproductive losses, that the parent(s) may have experienced. The book is 'written in plain language to make it readily understandable especially for those who are grieving a loss'. However, I found it less accessible than Pierce's book (above), although this may reflect to some extent its North American origin, and there was considerable overlap between chapters. All resources listed are in North America, which may limit their practical use in other countries.

When Your Baby Dies

Through miscarriage or stillbirth

Louis A. Gamino, Ann Taylor Cooney



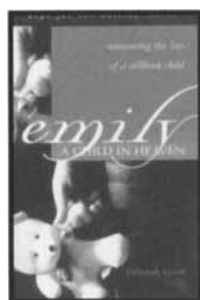
Minneapolis MN,
USA: Augsburg,
2002
48pp
\$4.99 pb
0-8066-4355-2

This attractive pocket-sized book in the 'Hope and Healing' series from Augsburg is clear and concise. One of the authors is a father whose son died shortly after birth, whilst his co-author's sister was stillborn. Chapters ask questions, such as 'Why do I feel so helpless after my newborn died?' and 'Am I

still a mother, even though my baby died?' These are then used as starting points for discussion. Each chapter concludes with a short list of 'Points to remember'. Grandparents and siblings, as well as mothers and fathers, are considered. The book is easy to read, achieves the authors' aim to 'offer some perspective and guidance on the experience of losing a child', and can be highly recommended.

Emily: A Child in Heaven

Deborah Lycett



Milton Keynes, UK
Authentic Lifestyle
2004
170pp
£5.99 pb
ISBN 1 86024 443 2

Written by the mother of a daughter who was stillborn, this is a moving description of what happened and the impact of this on her and her family. Of all the books reviewed here, this is probably the one that best conveys the emotional experience of parents/families. It is clear that the author's Christian faith is of huge importance in her life and in that of her family, and I found the endless references to what the Bible says somewhat exhausting at times. Having said that, I am sure that the author's account would be of great help to others going through a similar experience, even if they did not share her religious convictions, and provides a useful insight for those who help families following such a bereavement.

Dr. Martin Newman

Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist

Died... 30 parents have written accounts of their baby's death through SIDS. It is impossible not to be deeply moved by the pain and the love that is in every story. The feelings of shock and anguish, and the devastating effect on those left behind are powerfully described in the words of these parents.

At the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS) we know how important it is for parents bereaved in this way to know they are not alone. They ask, 'Is it normal to feel like this?' as they struggle with the pain and anger of their grief. Reading accounts like these is tremendously reassuring – other people have been there too, and they have survived.

By offering insights into the reality of grief and by describing the words and gestures which have been comforting or, sadly, those which have caused additional pain, this book also holds important lessons for those who want to offer support or whose work brings them into contact with bereaved families (eg police, health workers). The importance of good support in coping through such a traumatic experience is clear, whether it comes from family, friends or organisations such as FSID, whose 30th anniversary this book celebrates and commemorates.

The strongest message of this book is the immense love and longing felt by the authors for their baby: their precious child is always missed and will never be forgotten. •

Janet Scott

Communications Manager, SANDS

UK CONTACTS for miscarriage and neonatal death

The Miscarriage Association: tel: 01924 200799; www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS): tel 020 7436 5881; www.uk-sands.org

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSID): tel 0870 787 0554; www.sids.org.uk/fsid/

A B S T R A C T S

Loss and bereavement among Israel's Muslims: acceptance of God's will, grief, and the relationship to the deceased

Rubin SS, Yasien-Esmael H. *Omega* 2004; 49(2): 149-162

The beliefs and practices of Muslim citizens in Israel stem from a cultural-religious worldview that organises the public and private experience of loss and bereavement. Prolonged public experience of grief and ritualised mourning are discouraged in Islamic practice, which places great value on the acceptance of God's or Allah's will with restraint and understanding. This emphasis on acceptance and a return to functioning is clear-cut, while at the same

'When my baby died...'

Thirty parents tell their stories



London
Foundation for the
Study of Infant
Death (FSID)
62pp
2001
£3.50 pb

Losing a baby, and all the dreams and possibilities that are embodied in such a young life, is almost unbearable but the additional cruelty of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), or cot death, is that the death is so unexpected. In *When My Baby*

ABSTRACTS

time leaving significant room for individual variation. As the authors rightly say, while the attitudes put forward here are most representative of the Muslim minority in Israel, they are part and parcel of the general approach to loss within the Islamic world, which it is important for non-Muslims in every country to appreciate.

Undertaking bereavement research: sensitivities and sensibilities

Payne S, Field D. *Grief Matters* 2004; **7**(3); 52-56

Loss, grief and bereavement in palliative care: research directions

Kristjanson LJ, Lobb EA. *Grief Matters* 2004; **7**(3); 57-62

Grief and loss: the needs of the whole population

Currow DC. *Grief Matters* 2004; **7**(3); 63-66

This issue of *Grief Matters* discusses bereavement in the context of palliative care. The questions that it raises remained largely unresolved in 2004, and the writers show very clearly how much has still to be learned about the whole phenomenon of bereavement and grief. However disquieting this may be, at least, as the editor says, everyone involved in care will be stimulated to hold these questions in mind in their own work.

The authors of the first article, both experienced practitioners in the fields of palliative care and grief support, draw on their own research to describe problematic issues arising in bereavement research, including defining what constitutes a bereavement support service and when this begins, problems relating to observing support sessions, and the importance of providing appropriate support for both the bereaved and researchers. Although evidence suggests that most bereaved people find discussion of their experiences useful, even though it may be painful, many bereavement researchers experience considerable obstacles in obtaining ethical approval and accessing the bereaved. The article suggests strategies to overcome these barriers.

The second article outlines the theoretical context for understanding loss, grief and bereavement and summarises some of the recent questions relating to the merits of bereavement intervention. The sheer number of contemporary theories and models referred to underscores the difficulties in fully understanding these painful but unavoidable life processes. Challenging issues related to these concepts in the context of palliative care are examined. They include how to assess the needs of family members for bereavement support, how much support to provide, how to address the needs

of patients and families from non-dominant cultural groups, and how to manage concerns about loss, grief and bereavement in the context of dementia. Recommendations for future research are offered.

Professor Currow, who is the current president of Palliative Care Australia, puts forward the theory that grief and loss are issues for the whole community to consider. The priority remains to focus increasingly limited resources on the people who most need them (he is specifically referring to Australia, but the problem is worldwide). A whole-of-population approach is needed to ensure the best possible outcome for people at risk of traumatic grief, an approach that must harness prevention, screening and reliable evaluation of any intervention.

Expressions of grief on the world wide web

Guest editors: de Vries B, Roberts P. *Omega* 2004; **49**(1)

This special issue of *Omega* is devoted to a single subject. As the editors write, in North America death has become largely irrelevant in contemporary society, having little impact on the community as a whole – which is also true of other countries in the western world. On the other hand, for the surviving individuals death dramatically interrupts their lives and functioning. So how can they find a place to mourn? In this modern technological world, they are increasingly discovering it through cyberspace, and the six articles in this issue explore the different ways in which the bereaved – particularly younger people, who relate so closely to communication through the internet – have found a way of expressing their grief and of sharing their feelings of bereavement with others. The authors discuss, among other topics, the memorials found on the largest of the relevant web sites, Virtual Memorial Gardens; the memorials to those who have died of AIDS; and the sense of community found in the virtual cemetery. As one article remarks, 'Cyber cemeteries offer a new technical possibility for post death ritual... memorials may be submitted at any time, by anyone, from anywhere and they can be visited at any time, by anyone, from anywhere'.

Developing and evaluating the GriefLink web site: processes, protocols, dilemmas and lessons learned

Clark S, Burgess T, Laven G, Bull M, Marker J, Browne E. *Death Studies* 2004; **28**(10); 955-970

Like the previous article, this one discusses the principles and practice of establishing a website for helping the bereaved, although on this occasion in an Australian context. There is, the authors claim, little guidance for the design and evaluation of sites relating to loss and grief. The idea of a community

web site providing access to a database of local information led to the establishment of GriefLink, addressed to bereaved consumers and the professionals who help them. The article gives practical advice, providing recommendations for design and content. What to include, the method of presentation, ethical and legal dilemmas, the lessons learned through the process and the difficulties of evaluating the benefits of a grief-related site are among the many topics discussed. Although the project was designed to last for only 12 months, so that a long-term evaluation was not possible, the authors feel that a web site such as GriefLink may have benefits both for users and for care providers.

Condolence houses in Sanliurfa: fading away of a tradition and a creative attempt to preserve it

Yanik M, Vahip I, Kose S. *Death Studies* 2005; **29**(1); 65-74

This article reports the results of a search carried out to investigate the change in the traditional manner of giving and accepting condolences in Sanliurfa (formerly Ur), a city in south-eastern Turkey with a unique sociocultural structure. In most of the country condolence ceremonies seem to have faded away, but in Sanliurfa they are still regarded as very important, partly, no doubt, because the centuries-old tradition is being transformed to suit modern conditions of living. Formerly they took place in the house of the deceased person, and involved large numbers of visitors and extensive entertaining. Some years ago, partially through government initiative, 'condolence houses' began to be built, with less lavish entertainment. At first they were not popular, but, given the tendency for modern families to live in small apartments rather than large family houses, plus economic difficulties, they are now being accepted by this traditional Muslim society. •

Sheila Hodges and John Bush

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