



WEBWATCH

Resources for children and young people

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THERE ARE FEW SITES designed exclusively for use by bereaved children and young people and we need to be sure that those that exist are properly monitored to minimise the possibility of exploitation, particularly where live online interaction is offered, eg message boards, chat rooms. In conducting an extensive search, many promising web addresses and links led to dead ends and I noted the total disappearance of two excellent USA-based sites.

One site that remains is www.kidsaid.com created by GriefNet.org, a thriving internet-based bereavement community in the USA! Kidsaid's aim is to enable children 'all over the world' to share experiences and provide peer support. I would add a caution here as it is hard to ascertain if the site is still fully functional: a number of areas have attracted very little use, the guest book has not been signed for a number of years and an email sent by my son asking to join the email-based support group received no response. However, the site does have some useful resources, providing an extensive list of questions submitted by previous site users with appropriate answers, a large selection of stories and poems submitted by bereaved children and teens and a comprehensive 'Children and Grief Book List' (click on Annotated Bibliography).

The [Road For You site](http://RoadForYouSite) (www.roadforyou.org.uk) is a much more effective and well-used equivalent site. Created for young people by young people, it is part of the UK bereavement organisation, **Cruse Bereavement Care's** provision for children and young people. The Personal section considers experiences and emotions and

provides suggestions for coping together with helpful activities. A moderated message board provides site users with a means of interacting with peers, and photographs of loved ones can be submitted via the Gallery. With a Lads Only section, online games and links to other sites, this is undoubtedly one of the best bereavement resources for use by young people currently on the internet.

There are a few sites not designed solely for use by young people, but offering some excellent resources for them, as well as for professionals and parents. One such has been created by the UK organisation **Winston's Wish** at www.winstonswish.org.uk. Here children can submit questions relating to the emotional aspects of bereavement as well as medical questions requiring a reply by a doctor. The most frequently asked questions can be accessed via the site while the Feelings section enables visitors to express and exchange their experiences on a message board. Young people can also interact directly in an online forum in the Talk section. As a safety measure, site visitors must register their details to access both the Feelings and Talk sections and IP addresses are recorded. Guidelines are also given about online safety. The Do section enables users to create a virtual memory jar, record important dates on a calendar and contribute to a virtual graffiti wall. There are areas for posting personal stories and poems and submitting artwork, photos, video and audio clips. Ideas to help commemorate special days are downloadable and printable as Word documents. The site also provides details of its free helpline and sells resources including memory boxes, books and activity sheets.

Similarly, the Childhood Bereavement

Network at www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk has some good resources children can access, including a printable letter asking a friend for support. The organisation has produced two videos for young people, *You'll Always Remember Them, Even When You're Old* which features children aged 6-12 discussing their experiences of bereavement, *It Will Be OK*, created by bereaved children aged 13-18 to help their peers, and a set of postcards designed to alert supporters to ways in which they can help. The Associated Publications and Suggested Reading sections contain a number of useful resources which include work books for various ages. Many items can be ordered directly from the site.

The content for adults on the Child Bereavement Trust's site at www.childbereavement.org.uk has been reviewed already in *Webwatch* (Winter 2002). Resources which young people can access here include advice on funerals, returning to school or college after bereavement and links to several excellent UK-based websites and organisations.

Finally, young people in search of suitable books dealing with grief and bereavement could be directed to www.compassionbooks.com. All items carried by this USA-based site have been selected and reviewed by professionals or those with experience of loss. In addition to an excellent range of books for all ages, the site also sells videos, CDs and other resources relating to loss and bereavement. ●

1. Oliveri T. Grief groups on the internet. *Bereavement Care* 2003 22(3): 39-40
2. Salter A. An internet-based peer support service for young people. *Bereavement Care* 2004; 23(1): 3-4

EVENTS IN 2007

Cruse Bereavement Care Annual Conference. 13-15 Sept. Leicester, UK.
Further information: www.cruse.org.uk;
tel [0]20 8939 9543.

Bereavement – Reality and Myth. 11th BLTS annual conference. 21 Feb. Northwood, Middx, UK. Tel [0]20 8930 7375,
conference@bereavementandloss.co.uk

Supporting Children and Young People Through the Impact of Bereavement.
Childhood Bereavement Network conference.
31 Jan. London. Speakers include Rose Griffiths, Brendan McIntyre, Sacha Richardson. Contact Elaine Smith, tel [0]20 7843 6042; www.ncb.org.uk/conferences

Song Writing as Therapy in Palliative and Bereavement Care. Sobell Study Centre workshop. 23-24 Feb. Oxford, UK. Tel [0]1865 225886; www.sobellhospiceoxford.org

8th International Conference on Death, Dying and Disposal. 12-15 September. Bath, UK.
Further details from Caron Staley, [0]1225 386949; www.bath.ac.uk/cdas