interplay between the manner of death (such as traumatic death) and the development of complicated grief. This research suggests that the factors around the death, such as opportunity to view the body, may also need to be taken into account. ●

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BOOK REVIEW

Death, Dying and Bereavement
A Hong Kong Chinese Experience
Cecilia Lai Wan Chan
Amy Yin Man Chow (eds)

Aberdeen, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006, 384
$24.95
ISBN 9 62209 787 1

The publication of this book is a reflection of the growing awareness and maturity of palliative care and bereavement support services in Hong Kong, which have been growing over 20 years of practice. The relevance of this collection of studies, with contributions from the editors themselves, is particularly germane set against the unusually taboo, mystic and superstitious attitudes to death in Chinese culture.

Readers unfamiliar with Chinese customs may find the social and cultural exposition of death, dying and bereavement in Hong Kong especially interesting (chapters 4 and 13). From a bereavement support perspective, it is worth noting that whilst some beliefs are very unhelpful, such as the superstitious fear of 'contracting' ill fortune through contact with bereaved individuals, others provide great solace in reconciling loss and fostering the continuation of bonds, such as opportunities for honouring the dead and fulfilling familial and filial duties during traditional Ching Ming and Hungry Ghost festivals.

As a wider text, the bereavement supporter may also find applications from the curative, palliative and legal, as well as socio-anthropological discourse the book contains. Whilst it is accepted that ethnically and culturally specific dimensions may not readily apply across cultures, the experienced practitioner will no doubt identify common factors affecting bereavement, for instance, perceived medical competence or negligence in the care of terminally ill patients, of particular importance to the Chinese who place great significance on dying with dignity and preserving 'face' in a personal or familial context.

The book rightly points out that 'culture shapes the bereavement experience', and it is striking to read about the psychosocial aspects and interpersonal focus of grief from a Chinese point of view. For instance, it would be fascinating to find out whether emotional repressiveness, typical in the Chinese, particularly males, contributes to higher incidences of somatic manifestation of grief. The study in chapter 20 revealed a fascinating relationship between the occurrence of somatic illness in bereaved individuals and the prevalence of emotions, such as anger, sadness, depression, loneliness and fear. Wider research would certainly be needed, not least to establish the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of bereavement support services.

As the authors would agree, there is a discernible lack of culturally specific bereavement literature in the market, especially cross-cultural studies of the likes undertaken by Parkes *et al* (1997). *Death, Dying and Bereavement* can be recommended to all practitioners and academics working with ethnic and other minority groups in the bereavement field. Indeed, it is hoped that further similar material will be developed in the future. ●

Thomas Li
Bereavement support volunteer

* PARKES CM, LAUNGANI P, YOUNG B (1997). *Death and Bereavement Across Cultures.* London: Routledge.

When these quality practices are established in schools, the role of the counsellor in the management of critical incidents can be clearly articulated. Training and development in crisis management is recommended for the school leadership team in conjunction with the school counsellors. Team building and team training strategies would assist in establishing good communication and direction for the team members. Each member's role within the team needs to be clearly outlined and written in the school plan. This assists the school counsellor in knowing their role and what is expected of them and what is expected of others in the management of the critical incident. This role could differ between schools depending on team members' skills. Good leadership, team management and support in managing critical incidents are vital for the wellbeing of school counsellors as well as others.

After an incident, evaluation of the school's crisis management plan and intervention processes, and review of team members' roles, are recommended for quality practice in crisis management. A checklist could be designed and referred to when evaluating the school crisis management plan and intervention procedures. It is recommended that this evaluation or operational debriefing is facilitated by a senior counsellor. This will help all members of the crisis team to be objective about their role in the processes. This evaluation should occur as soon as possible after the school community has returned to normal activities.

Although it is a stressful time for all those within and associated with the school community, when given appropriate training, support and adequate resources, school personnel are able to provide supportive services, short-term counselling and appropriate referrals to community services for those affected in their school community (Schonfeld, Newgass, 2001). These recommendations are also applicable to those providing bereavement care services in other areas in the community. ●

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Based on a paper presented at the Seventh International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society, 12 -15 July 2005, London, UK.

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BOOK REVIEW

Childhood Bereavement
Developing the curriculum and pastoral support
Nina Job, Gill Frances

London: The National Children's Bureau
2004, 71pp
£16.00 pb
ISBN 1 90478 714 2

Childhood Bereavement is written in an accessible style without compromising its credibility. Information is well presented with a limited use of technical language. Importantly, childhood bereavement is linked into current UK frameworks and agendas such as mental health, National Healthy School Standards and personal, social and health education, and focuses on a comprehensive approach, similar to that advocated in *Grief in School Communities**.

Grieving and mourning practices across cultural groups are described and the need for schools to be alert to accommodate these in the care and support of individuals as well as in school management practices. Whilst 'getting school back to normal' is important to re-establish the safety and predictability of school life, the authors point out that there is no exact time that can be set for grieving and ongoing support is needed for as long as the young people need and want it.

As well as clear, up-to date information throughout the book, four case studies of how schools managed differing bereavement events provide practical insights and excellent guidance for school communities. In particular, the case study of a school for young people with severe learning disabilities provides specific practice-based wisdom for school personnel catering for a specific population.

The contribution of curriculum on loss and grief is illustrated by exemplar lessons for each UK Key stage, providing concrete illustration for teachers and demonstrating the importance of matching content to developmental level.

One important omission is consideration of the impact of bereavement on the professional role of school personnel. However, this book gives an excellent example of 'joined up' thinking, placing bereavement within the wider policy and practice agendas. Whilst it is based on UK policy and educational practice, it provides a useful guide as to how to integrate grief into mainstream activity. ●

Louise Rowling
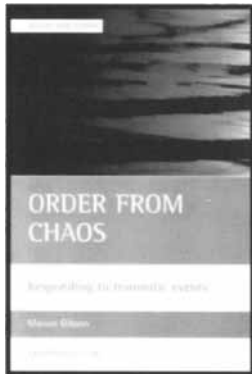*Associate Professor, University of Sydney*

* ROWLING L (2003). Grief in School Communities: Effective Support Strategies. Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

BOOK REVIEWS

Responding to disasters and crises

Order from Chaos
Responding to Traumatic Events (3rd edn)

Marion Gibson

Bristol, UK: Policy Press
2006, 239 pp
£55.00 hb
ISBN 1 86134 698 0
£18.99 pb
ISBN 1 86134 697 2

SINCE THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS BOOK in 1991, our experience of mass traumatic events has, sadly, increased. However, thanks to the work of key publications such as this, so too has our understanding of their psychological and social impact and how best to prepare those responding to the needs of people affected. In this new edition, Marion Gibson draws on her personal experiences, case studies and theoretical approaches in examining the range of reactions to traumatic events and their ripple effects. Here, those new to this field can learn about the nature, types and phases of disaster.

Gibson's material is clearly laid out with case study examples and helpful illustrative figures. Psychosocial reactions, from normal ones through to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, are examined in the context of research and alongside a review of the theoretical models underlying interventions. The author explains that an understanding of such models is essential to assist responders as part of their preparation and training.

The psychosocial needs of those injured and bereaved are discussed, including the needs of children in crisis situations that involve them. The point is well made that the specific features and dynamics of major disasters must be understood by those providing immediate, medium- or longer-term support. Such helpers may find the practical guidelines in chapter 10 of this book helpful, as well as the overview of organisational responses. This last provides a framework for understanding multi-agency planning and response.

Finally, in reviewing research into the impact of work with disaster and trauma on responders, Gibson stresses the importance of pre-crisis training and understanding for all helpers.

A Bolt from the Blue
Coping with disasters and acute traumas

Salli Saari

London: Jessica Kingsley, 2005, 256pp
£19.95 pb
ISBN 1 84310 313 3

Saari's book discusses the impact of traumatic events and the key principles underlying acute crisis work. Case study examples are used to illustrate the main features of traumatic situations and ways of processing such experiences, as well as the practical implications for crisis support.

The book provides a basic introduction to trauma and will be an interesting initial read for those new to this field. Examples of different types of traumatic events are discussed, such as disaster, suicide, homicide and sudden natural death. Anecdotal extracts illustrate the different stages of processing experiences from the initial shock phase ('the mind is taking time out') to

working through reactions and reorientation towards a new normal. Brief attention is given to important topics such as the media's coverage of events and children's ways of coping with trauma.

Chapters on psychological debriefing draw heavily, and rather uncritically, on the traditional work of Jeffrey Mitchell. However, somewhat as a postscript, a final chapter begins to acknowledge and briefly discuss the lively debates generated by such interventions. Interested readers should refer to the recently produced NICE guidelines on PTSD to learn about the current thinking on this within the UK and recommendations for the most appropriate interventions following trauma*.

Saari co-ordinated the Finnish response to the Asian tsunami and provided support to many of the Finish survivors of that disaster. It would be interesting to read of the lessons learned for trauma response from that experience, should she choose to follow up this work in the future.

*National Institute for Clinical Excellence. *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): The Management of PTSD in Adults and Children in Primary and Secondary Care.* Wetherby, Yorks, UK: NICE, 2005, www.nice.org.uk

Compassion and Courage in the Aftermath of Traumatic Loss
Kathryn Bedard
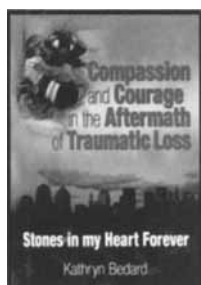
Binghampton, NY,
USA: Haworth Press
2006, 252pp
$39.95 hb
ISBN 0 78902 741 2
$19.95 pb
ISBN 0 78902 742 9

Kathryn Bedard writes here about her experience of volunteering after the World Trade Centre attacks of 2001. Her role involved c-oordinating family visits to Ground Zero following the attacks.

Part I outlines the nature and function of New Jersey's Family Assistance Centre (which may be of particular interest to readers interested in current UK planning on humanitarian assistance centres). Part II consists of her journal detailing what she saw and felt during that time. In her words the entries are 'raw and unpolished', often collated from scraps of paper or drafted at the end of a 17-hour day. The purpose is to capture her thoughts and feelings from that time. For example:

> September 23 – I go to the FAC today with a coworker to work in the trailer. She concerns herself with trying to organise the data collection, what to do with paperwork, and the forms that are supposed to be going back and forth but aren't doing so consistently. It seems that experiencing any type of order when so many people are coming and going is going to be difficult at best...Each day brings new volunteer faces, and the operations must be explained and reinforced all over again.'

Reading this book will give those on disaster response teams an insight into the logistical realities of responding to a large-scale disaster. Other entries describe the pain and grief of those directly affected by the tragedy, the personal challenges associated with undertaking this work and its profound impact on responders.

Anne Eyre
Crisis Management Consultant
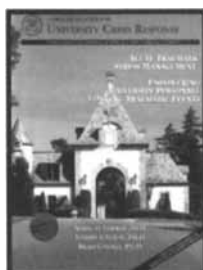
Crisis Response in Our Schools
Mark Lerner, Joseph Volpe, Brad Lindell

New York: American
Academy of Experts in
Traumatic Stress
2003, 122pp
$26.95 pb
ISBN 0 96747 623 2

University Crisis Response
Mark Lerner, Joseph Volpe, Brad Lindell

New York: American
Academy of Experts in
Traumatic Stress
2004, 116pp
$24.95.
ISBN 0 96747 625 9

Many of the chapters in these two book are almost identical, with only minor changes such as professor for teacher, campus for schools. This does not detract from the version for schools, but certainly compromises the university-oriented text.

An advantage of the schools book is that, unlike other American books about school crisis management that focus almost entirely on technical aspects, this gives careful, detailed description aimed at all school educators on how to support students, and a focus on the development of a school response team rather than external support. Practical information is given on such issues as who should be on the team, what immediate responses might occur, funerals and memorials. Unfortunately these are presented uncritically, without advising school personnel to weigh up specific school contextual issues that may influence the outcomes of actions.

The section on the role of the media is minimal given the high public accountability being demanded of schools and the intrusiveness on school community members of their coverage. No attention is given to how school staff may need to 'protect' students.

One chapter describes grief counselling, but the research on which this is based is out-dated. For example, there

is an over-reliance on describing 'phases' characteristic of Kubler Ross's work, without attention to more recent approaches such as grief tasks (Worden, 1991) and the dual process model of coping (Stroebe, Schut, 1999). Another potentially useful chapter focuses on the needs of caregivers but unfortunately offers a very individualistic focus at odds with earlier references to the 'school family'. Describing this would have shown how schools can capitalise on support from colleagues who have had a shared experience. The descriptions of management processes give useful advice, as do the practical summary documents at the back of the book.

All of the above comments apply equally to *University Crisis Response*. A book on this topic is urgently needed, as researchers such as Balk (1997) and Wren (1999) have highlighted. Unfortunately Lerner, Volpe and Lindell make no reference to the current findings from research in this area. They discuss crises relevant to this age group, but do not focus on describing the life worlds and developmental challenges of the 18-24 age group; instead they repeat the child and adolescent information. Reference to work on emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004) and the challenges of transitions from home to university and college life would have brought currency and relevancy to this book. There seems to be no recognition of a difference between school teaching and faculty responsibilities in universities.

The strength of these books is their practical advice about the management of crises. They are not, however, current in the theoretical and research underpinnings. ●

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