



WEBWATCH

Helping those bereaved through road accidents

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APPROXIMATELY 3,500 PEOPLE DIE each year in the UK alone as the result of road traffic collisions. Such accidents account for more sudden violent deaths than any other cause. **Brake** is a UK-based charity that aims to prevent road death by providing better education for road users, but it also provides support for accident survivors and bereaved people. Its website at www.brake.org.uk has many useful resources for bereavement workers.

The bereavement content is all in the Help and Support section. A useful 86-page PDF guide, *Advice for bereaved families and friends following a death on the road*, has different versions for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and is available in a number of languages including Bengali, Spanish and Polish. It is broken into convenient sections on, for example, viewing the body after a crash, the post mortem, visiting the crash site and obtaining medical information. Practical issues are also covered, including funeral arrangements, claiming compensation, help with debts and dealing with the media, as well as criminal prosecutions and court procedures. A separate article considers 'Coping With Grief When Someone You Love Is Killed On the Road'.

Click on *Advice for bereaved children* to access *Someone Has Died in a Road Crash*, an excellent 48-page booklet for adults and children of various ages to read together. An accompanying guide for professionals using the booklet also has specific advice for working with parents, carers and teachers.

There is a list of other, mainly UK-based organisations offering help and detailed information about erecting roadside memorials. Among a number of official guides produced by government and health agencies are the Association of Chief Police Officers' *Road Death Investigation Manual* and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's guidelines on PTSD.

Under the heading, **For Professionals**, is information on training for people working with road crash victims and interesting extracts from the Family Liaison Officer's handbook including best practice in breaking bad news and working with diversity. This gives an overview of different beliefs regarding death, post mortems, funerals, organ donation and visiting the bereaved family from Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist perspectives. Finally, as well as many other excellent resources for those concerned with road safety, the organisation provides a **telephone helpline**.

Mothers Against Drink Driving (MADD) is a non-profit-making USA-based organisation aimed specifically at stopping deaths caused by drunken driving. Created 25 years ago by grieving mothers, this organisation is now well-known and respected throughout the USA and beyond. Through the **website at www.madd.org** crash victims and the bereaved can access a wealth of practical information. Support includes a **24-hour telephone helpline**, referral to a victim advocate who can help with emotional and practical issues and an **online forum**,

although I have not been able to access this in order to assess its organisation.

The Victims section provides good resources **for bereavement workers**. A short video gives insight into the lives of families affected by drunk driving and a number of articles and PDF documents, some available in Spanish, can be accessed under Brochures. These include *Men and Mourning*, *We Hurt Too* for adult siblings and *Unique Grief* for non-family bereaved who have lost a friend or colleague. A number of brochures will help those working with **children and adolescents**, including *Helping Children Cope with Death* and *Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers*. Further resources for young people can be accessed via Youth Victims/Survivors from the side menu. The Bereaved Victims/Survivors section of the site also provides access to PDFs on *Spousal Grief* and *Grandparents Grief*.

The organisation produces a **magazine**, *MADDvocate* and past articles can be accessed on the website. Of particular interest in the Spring 2006 edition are 'Finding the strength to cope with the death of a spouse' which explores the reactions and coping skills needed by two widows and 'Trails and consequences' which considers how unrealistic expectations of the justice system can not only leave the bereaved feeling let down but slow, or even halt, the healing process. The Summer 2005 edition includes good articles on using creative therapies to aid grief and on survivor guilt and the Winter 2005 edition includes an article about 'Erasing the stigma of professional counselling'. ●

EVENTS IN 2007

Attachment and bereavement in child- and adulthood. 4 July. Birmingham, UK. Colin Murray Parkes, Jacqui Stedmon. **Bereavement issues surrounding organ transplantation.** 17 Oct. London, UK. Magi Sque. Bereavement Research Forum symposia. Tel [0]20 8625 6037; www.brforum.org.uk

Death and burial in the Muslim world. 14 April. Bradford, UK. Conference. Tel [0]113 343851; a.macklin@leeds.ac.uk

Relating to the dead. 26 April. Tony Walter. **Resilience and bereavement.** 5 July. Linda Machin. **Complicated grief.** 1 Nov. Colin Murray Parkes. St Christopher's Hospice open meetings. Tel [0]20 8768 4656; www.stchristophers.org.uk

Death and dying in contemporary Japan. 27 July. Bath, UK. Carl Becker. Centre for Death and Society. Tel [0]1225 386949; cdas@bath.ac.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care – the UK's leading bereavement organisation

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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University of Leicester

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