acceptance of death as a necessary aspect of life, and recognition of and willingness to engage with the sufferings of others. These meanings transcend the littleness of 'I' and can be seen as spiritual meanings.

One type of meaning is found by **continuing bonds** to the dead. This may be constructive if it enables people to enjoy and make use of the memories of their times together, but it can also be problematic if, for instance, they see it as their sacred duty to grieve forever as a tribute to a dead partner or child.

We must beware of over-emphasising meaning making. It may well be true that some people have the capacity to achieve great things in the face of adversity, to discover meanings that enrich their lives and those of others. But we disappoint ourselves and undermine our clients if we expect too much of them. For many it is sufficient to survive, and to be reasonably content with the restrictions of a world that is shrinking as their brains and bodies grow older. Likewise the terms **closure** and **resolution** are unhelpful if we expect the bereaved to forget the past and start again. 'The future is an illusion and the present too near at hand to be clearly understood, *only the past is real* and its reality increases as we and the world grow older' (Jackson, 1948).

Words are the symbols we use to communicate meaning. They are useful only if the meaning they convey is shared between individuals. Much of the time minor differences, shades of meaning, are of little importance; indeed those who agonise about them are accused of pedantry. We even get away with incorrect usage, such as using the word 'bereavement' to mean 'grief', when both parties understand what is intended. Problems only arise when sloppy or ambiguous language leads to misunderstandings or failure to communicate important issues. It is for this reason that we need to be on our guard. ●

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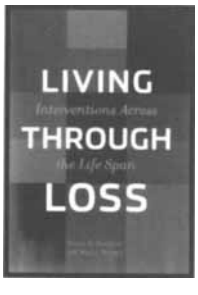
BOOK REVIEW

Living Through Loss

Interventions Across the Life Span

NR Hooyman, BJ Kramer



New York: Columbia University Press
2006
452pp
£42.00/$65.00 hb
ISBN 0 231 12246 2

Nancy Hooyman and Betty Kramer, two professors of social work at the Universities of Washington and Wisconsin respectively, have produced a well-researched, comprehensive and carefully crafted text. This text is the best single-source reference on a range of losses across the life span that I have had the pleasure to read in some time.

Divided into 14 chapters the book opens with an exploration of theoretical perspectives on grief and an excellent chapter on resiliency and meaning-making. Taking a life-span approach the book then has a chapter on grief and loss in childhood, adolescence, young adults, middle adulthood, midlife adults and finally older adults. Following each of these developmental periods, a chapter comprehensively addresses appropriate evidence-based interventions. I particularly appreciated their reference to individual, family, group and community-level interventions.

Each chapter is characterised by a comprehensive synthesis of current theory, empirical research and clinical practice. The authors also sensitively interweave the professional and the personal through appropriate reference to their personal lives.

The final chapter on professional self-awareness and self-care is an excellent contribution that explores the gifts and challenges of working with the bereaved. The chapter includes a useful personal assessment of self-care strategies and provides a range of concrete self-care strategies.

Although written for social work professionals this volume would make a very useful text for both the experienced practitioner and the beginning student of the field. This text takes a broad view of grief and loss and represents a major achievement and would make a valuable additional to a professional library. ●

Christopher Hall
Director, Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

which helped them to realise that others were in the same boat.

Observations

My purpose was to identify helping or hindering factors, and whether outside help is relevant or necessary. For those without family support it can be helpful, but others also find it beneficial and effective in helping them move forward.

There was no indication of awareness, either by parents or some grief support agencies, of the need for some children to 'revisit' their grief as they grow and develop (Jewett 1994) or that tertiary interventions might be required two years on from the death of a parent for 22% of them (Worden and Silverman 1996).

My recommendations included the need for loss, death and bereavement education in school curricula, and for many parents and professionals. As Silverman (2000) reflected: 'In many ways we are both deaf and mute to children's thoughts about death. In many ways it is worse than silence from the grave. What a great disrespect this is, to ignore the child's reality'. ●

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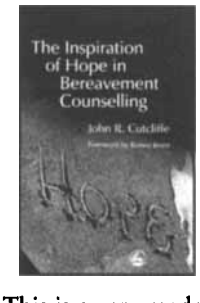
BOOK REVIEW

The Inspiration of Hope in Bereavement Counselling

John R Cutcliffe



London, England: Jessica Kingsley, 2004
144pp
£15.95/$2.95 pb
ISBN 1 84310 082 7

This is a very readable book for all involved in bereavement support. It is a clearly written study of a little acknowledged and unspoken area of the process of grief: the revival of hope. John Cutcliffe addresses the journey undertaken with the client from hopelessness towards a successful re-engagement with life.

The inspiration of hope is seen as an intangible, unobtrusive and implicit process, yet Cutliffe has put together a theory that makes practical good sense. The book would be a valuable tool for new support workers who have undertaken recent training and those supervising them. Trainers could find a new perspective for explaining a version of the person-centred relationship, and experienced counsellors should find that much of their own practice is re-affirmed. Cutliffe opens with a section on the philosophy and history of the meaning of hope. The main content covers the theory and practice of when and how the aims might be used in the process of bereavement support counselling.

Throughout the book the author acknowledges that the information gathered involves many variables and he is very open in the way he puts forward his findings. There are many references to the responses from both ex-clients and practitioners. The careful methods of grounded theory are clearly set out at the end of the book for those interested in the research methodology.

The author leaves the reader with the implied question: 'Do I need to make the inspiration of hope a focus of work with the bereaved client, and if so, how will I do it?' A useful book to add to any suggested reading list. ●

Joy Caplin
Person-centred counsellor, Cruse volunteer

WEBWATCH

Young widows and widowers

Amanda Aitken BA PGCE DipCouns
Counsellor, Torbay Social Services, Devon, UK

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE A NUMBER of good internet resources for people who have lost their partners, fewer are aimed specifically at helping young widows and widowers. In the USA the Census Bureau estimates for 2000 were around one million widowed people between the ages of 20 and 49. This represents less than 7% of all widowed people in the USA and less than 0.005% of the population. Consequently it is easy for young widows and, particularly, widowers to feel isolated, left alone to cope with issues many of which are very specific to this type of bereavement. One of the most popular websites offering much-needed support is **www.YoungWidow.org**. Launched in 2001, it is sponsored by Young Widow-Chapter Two, a non-profit organisation based in Texas.

A major aim is to help widowed people 'recover, reclaim and rebuild' by facilitating the exchange of experiences, information and support. The site describes itself as a 'thriving online community' at the heart of which is a well-used **bulletin board** where members are free to post comments and raise issues. Forums are moderated and access is for members only who must register two email addresses and create a user name and profile. The site appears to take user safety seriously and reserves the right to remove any profiles that appear bogus. Clearly stressed is the fact that this is a self-help network and that anyone requiring grief or crisis counselling should seek professional help.

In addition to the bulletin board, the site provides a list of support groups throughout the USA. There is also a **Library** section with an excellent bibliography, covering many aspects of bereavement for men, women and parents. The **Kids and Teens** section includes a discussion board for widowed parents which includes a list of website resources for and about grieving children. A further discussion board for young pregnant widows is accessible from here. **Book Recommendations** takes you to the section of the library dealing specifically with publications that may be very helpful for children and young people.

Although USA-based, with links to regional and national sites there, I feel that many of this website's resources could be helpful to people wherever they may be.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy has published statistics for the UK indicating that there are around 36,500 widowed men and women under the age of 40 and approximately 142,000 under the age of 50. Again, UK-based internet resources for young people in this group are rather limited but one organisation offering support and friendships to widowed under-50s is **www.wayfoundation.org.uk**. For an annual fee of £15 this registered charity provides members with access to a secure online message board, a chat room and comprehensive links to other useful sites. Members also receive a regular newsletter, lists of local social activities for adults and children and information about weekend trips and holidays. The book loaning service offers a number of helpful titles that can be borrowed for up to three months free of charge except for return postage.

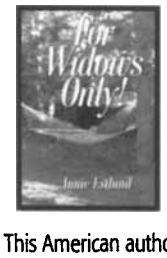
One link in particular, at **www.greenwidow.com**, may be of interest to anyone concerned with the issues surrounding being **widowed while pregnant**. This small website, created by young widow Caroline Green, provides her downloadable publication *A Matter of Life and Death*. This 94-page booklet details the experiences of five widowed pregnant mothers, including Caroline herself.

Finally, anyone seeking more information on financial issues, including benefits, should access the fact sheets at **www.directgov.uk** which give details of the widowed parent's allowance, bereavement allowance and a guide to benefits and money after a death. ●

BOOK REVIEW

For Widows Only

Annie Estlund



Lincon, NE, USA
iUniverse Inc, 2003
299pp
$22.95/£19.99 pb
0 59529 110 4

This American author first started her notes on widowhood influenced by its effect on her younger friends. She says she identified a gap in the market on the topic, but only wrote her book after suffering her own sudden widowhood, aged 55.

Being a writer, she had kept a journal, an honest and useful record of her grieving and a self-analytical account of her own feelings and coping (and non-coping) mechanisms. Relevant to her own personality, her generalisations are therefore sometimes not meaningful to others and even naïve. Grief is so individual to each person in their own social and personal circumstances. Her observations are not as insightful as, for instance, CS Lewis's who, back in 1976, said, 'Why did no one tell me grief felt so like fear?'. Or Joan Didion, a fellow American, in 2006, 'Grief takes one to a place that no one knows till they reach it.'

Estlund's practical advice for post-bereavement is good with chapters on immediate jobs, using all offered help, expressing grief and accepting all invitations, not only to mitigate loneliness but also to maintain social contacts. Financial advice is, understandably, geared to the American scene. Perhaps she should have advised finding lawyers, financial advisers and doctors young enough to see one out. 'Coping with being alone' is a chapter full of practical suggestions of activities, but with less emphasis on the emotional loneliness so well expressed by Katherine Whitehorn: 'Living in another country where you are an unwilling refugee.' I recommend this book with the above reservations. ●

Caryle Adams
General Medical Practitioner (retired)

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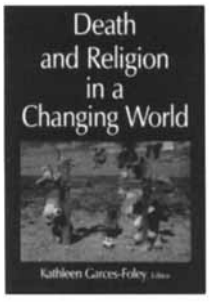
BOOK REVIEWS

New views of religion and grief

Death and Religion in a Changing World



Kathleen Garces-Foley (ed)
New York: ME Sharpe
2005, 336pp
£51.50/$76.95 hb
ISBN 0 75910 788 2
£20.95/$30.95 pb
ISBN 0 75910 789 0

Dead but Not Lost

Robert Goss, Dennis Klass
Walnut Creek, CA, USA:
AltaMira Press, 2005, 299pp
£55.00/$72.00 hb
ISBN 0 75910 788 5
£20.99/$26.95 pb
ISBN 0 75910 789 0

SEVERAL BOOKS SURVEYING DEATH, BELIEFS and rituals in the various world religions have been published in the past 15 years. They tend to homogenise the various religions, skating over variations within each belief system as it manifests itself in different cultures; and there is little or no real engagement with western bereavement theory which, if mentioned at all, appears as a given. In 2006 two books were published that have broken this mould. *Death and Religion in a Changing World* focuses on how religions today interact with both local and global culture. *Dead But Not Lost* shows both how religion (notably Buddhism) can affect grief, and how grief (for the founder) may have shaped several religions as early disciples created a shared memory. Those who put the effort into reading these two complex books will be rewarded by seeing both religion and grief in new ways.

***Tony Walter**, Director of Studies, MSc Death and Society, Bath University*

The aim of Garces-Foley's book is to explore religions in their 'lived embodiment in the lives of real people facing real death'. Scholarly chapters by anthropologists, theologians, historians, sociologists, psychologists and religious studies specialists demonstrate a living process of interaction between religious approaches to death, and globalisation, migration, social, psychological and technological change.

Klass suggests that religion incorporates a sense of transcendent reality, and a worldview with a theodicy making sense of suffering, and offers a community with shared meanings – a 'sacred canopy' (Berger 1967). Modernity, for Garces-Foley and Holcombe, creates 'new religious sensibilities'. Walter suggests that the media provide a new canopy 'highlighting human frailty, tackling the problem of suffering and affirming an overarching worldview' with faith in rationality and technique seeming to make the world safe. When disasters like the Dunblane school shooting undermine this, the media, political and church authorities produce narratives to unite people to make sense of it, eg by emphasising children's innocence and hope. Yet technology fails, or contributes to horrific events, while the media also fail to solve the problem of evil in the face of 'meaningless' acts such as Dunblane and the Oklahoma City bombing. Technology also provides extraordinary rituals – ashes being blown into space, cryogenics, and online internet memorials.

In Islam, Christianity and Judaism, the tension between prescriptions and practice leads to new developments. The latter faiths have had to respond to the growth of individualism and the professionalisation of death, while maintaining core beliefs, prayers and rituals. Many others are seeking spiritual meaning in a 'new kind of religious script' allowing for control and individualisation.

Hinduism and Sikhism in the diaspora have to adapt to the professionalisation of medicine and the funeral industry. American Tibetan Buddhists have 'adopted the American psychological culture in which experiencing and exploring feelings and expressing those feelings in intimate interpersonal situations are a way to truth' (Goss and Klass).

Disasters may create temporary communities, with spontaneous memorials sometimes becoming institutionalised, as at Oklahoma City. Klass illustrates the growth of a new sacred community of bereaved parents who find the transcendental element through their dead children, and meaning in shared grief. Older traditions, such as Chumash Native Americans in California, as Kelley shows, may recover or reprise old rituals around death which, although apparently conflicting with views of the Catholic members of their communities, are slowly being seen to be complimentary rather than contradictory.

Death and Religion in a Changing World is an outstanding, scholarly book with lengthy, but readable, chapters framing the discussion around personal narratives. I recommend it highly.

Shirley Firth
Lecturer, Cultural Perspectives on Death and Bereavement

BERGER P (1967). *The Sacred Canopy*. New York: Anchor Books.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dead But Not Lost concerns connections between expressions of grief and religious dynamics. The reader is given rich information about ways of grieving in other times, across varying world religions and in different subcultures. The descriptive aspects, which situate individuals within their overarching cultural narratives, are fascinating. The material is complex but the writing is peppered with memorable stories and quotations. In talking about acceptance of the inevitability and ubiquity of death, the authors quote the Buddha's words from the Parinirvana Sutra: 'You should know all things in the world are impermanent; coming together inevitably means parting. Do not be troubled for this is the nature of life' (p107).

Similarly, the essence of a chapter on continuing bonds with revered teachers and founders of world religions is neatly captured: 'Emerson said that institutions are the lengthened shadow of one man (or, he should have added, one woman)' (p140).

But the authors go far beyond the descriptive giving an insightful examination of the interrelationships of politics, religion and grief. Their arguments offer many insights. In their concluding chapter, the authors give examples of how continuing bonds may be maintained through the joining of like-minded individuals in intimate small-scale communities, such as bereaved parents' groups. These offer an 'inter-subjective' route out of the isolation that can dominate in an individualistic society.

Goss and Klass propose that, to take root and survive, such new ways of grief must have both mythos (intuitive truth) and logos (rational, scientific truth). Their book does an excellent job of integrating these elements. It makes a challenging yet satisfying read. ●

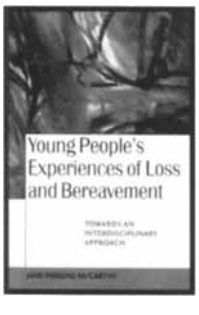
Jan Oyebode
Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Birmingham University

A major research review

Young People's Experiences of Loss and Bereavement

Towards an Interdisciplinary Approach

Jane Ribbens McCarthy



Maidenhead, Berks:
Open University Press
2006, 251pp
£65.00/$113.00 hb
ISBN 0 33521 665 X
£19.00/$34.00 pb
ISBN: 0 33521 664 1

This book is based on Ribbens McCarthy's extensive review, undertaken on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Trust, examining the broad literatures around young people and loss and bereavement. It is a welcome, as well as a wide-ranging and challenging, extension of this report and will be of particular relevance to academics and practitioners who have an interest in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of research, as well as to those wishing to familiarise themselves with the extensive range of studies in this area.

Ribbens McCarthy's handling of this vast literature, with its contradictions and differences, is excellent. As the subtitle suggests, her approach is an interdisciplinary one, offering an overview of the variety of accounts – autobiographical, psychological, sociological and anthropological – that have formed our views on 'young people', 'bereavement' and 'young people's experience of loss and bereavement'.

The book is in three parts. Part 1 provides an important basis for Part 2. It gives us both an understanding of how the author approached the review, and an explanation of the difficulties she experienced in trying to make sense of the diverse, and often competing, evidence that the research literature contains. She lays the groundwork by exploring the ways in which the various disciplines consider the experience of young people and of bereavement, identifying the differences between their approaches to research, and illuminating and critiquing their underlying assumptions and methodological strategies.

Part 2 examines evidence from three sources: from young people themselves, from studies for bereavement as a risk factor in the lives of young people, and from studies that address the impact of the social contexts of bereavement on young people's experience of it. Ribbens McCarthy notes the extent to which these are used selectively to support particular arguments, and we are reminded that the impact of parental and sibling bereavement is not determined, but a feature of the complex relationships between individual, family and social characteristics, in which some will fare better than others.

Finally, in Part 3, Ribbens McCarthy draws some conclusions from the extensive, but inconsistent and, at times, simplistic, evidence. She then goes on to focus on the nature of 'meaning' and the benefits this may provide, theoretically and methodologically, as a basis for extending our knowledge and understanding of the experience of bereaved young people.

This is not a book of answers and those looking for definitions and certainty will be disappointed. Nor is it a quick read or a text into which one can readily dip. Rather, it is a book that steadily takes us through a series of arguments about the nature of knowledge, the assumptions underlying research and how we can evaluate this, before presenting a series of studies against which these arguments are placed. What it does extremely well, and, indeed, uniquely is provide a wide and deep exploration of the extensive, often bewildering and conflicting, literature about the experiences of young people, loss and bereavement, drawing from it useful conclusions as well as identifying gaps in the research, and pointing to possible ways forward. ●

Liz Rolls
Clara Burgess Charity Senior Research Fellow

Working with bereaved children

Children Also Grieve

Linda Goldman

London: Jessica Kingsley, 2006
80pp, £15.99 hb
ISBN 1 84310 808 1

Part storybook, part wordbook to help children understand about grief and death, a dog called Henry is the narrator and central character here, part of a family where a resident grandfather has died. Henry tells the story of his own and other family members' reactions and encourages the reader to explore their own thoughts and feelings. A range of emotions are covered, including sadness, shame, guilt and anger, and some common questions explored such as 'What happens after death?' Each new theme in the book is introduced by Henry saying something about his own experience, for instance, 'Often I wonder where Grandfather is' and 'Sometimes I think it was my fault Grandfather died'. A statement is then followed up by an open question for the child, 'What do you wonder about?' or 'Do you have any "If onlys"?' This structure helps normalise feelings and thoughts and encourages children to talk.

Children Also Grieve is dotted with photographs, many of Henry, but also of other family members, and of beautiful scenes of nature. The language is easy, child-friendly and encourages openness. It gives the message that it is important and OK to have fun after someone dies. The gentle, engaging style will be successful with many children, though some older ones may be put off by the idea of relating their feelings to a dog. At what point a young person would be 'too old' for this approach will depend on the individual child; my 13-year old son said it would not put him off.

Good Grief

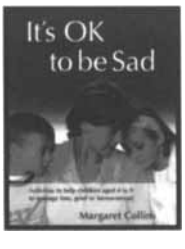
Kim 'Tip' Frank

Chapin, SC, USA: YouthLight/Milton Keynes, Bucks, UK: Incentive Plus, 2004, 76pp
$16.95/£18.95 pb
ISBN 1 88963 661 4

This American workbook/discussion guide includes a story about William, a boy whose grandfather has died. Aimed at children aged 6–11 years old, it would be suitable for small group or individual work but is much shorter and more specific in its focus than the UK equivalent, *Good Grief** by Barbara Ward (1996). The exercises and William's story are structured around Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Unlike *Children Also Grieve*, this book is entirely monochrome which makes it appear less child-friendly. It might appeal to someone who wanted a clear, structured approach to working with a small group – photocopying of the exercises and the self-contained story is encouraged. However, though this is not intended by the author, I would be concerned that someone new to this work might interpret the text in an overly prescriptive manner. More experienced practitioners are unlikely to find any new material here.

It's OK to be Sad

Margaret Collins



London: Sage, 2005
91pp
£60.00/$64.95 hb
ISBN 1 41291 824 3
£17.99/25.95 pb
ISBN 1 41291 825 1

Effectively a teacher's manual on the subject of loss, this PSHE (personal, social and health education) resource is designed for whole class activities with four–nine year olds. It is easy to use because the resources needed are generally available in schools, eg practical equipment such as books, paper, drawing materials, and the classroom environment, circle time or R-time.

A succinct, clear introduction explains the thinking behind the book and also lists simple activities to ensure that circle time remains dynamic and fun whilst dealing with sadness and loss. Each subsequent section starts with reading a book (eg *Dogger* by Shirley Hughes), a describing a scenario or reflecting on a particular situation followed by an exercise (eg exploring how you might feel if you lost your favourite toy). The use of story characters allows children to empathise without becoming too involved, though the format might need to be adapted for younger children, with more of an emphasis on class discussion rather than pen and paper activities.

Collins says that her book is not intended as a tool to use when a child is bereaved but rather as a preparation for loss. However PSHE works best when it is flexible and tailored to those within a class. It would be an ideal resource to use when a child or children in a class are experiencing loss and grief. This area of work makes a vital contribution to bringing one of the most essential learning tasks of life into schools, helping children to recognise the universality of loss and encouraging them to feel confident about their own and other people's feelings. If this book was used routinely across the country it would contribute to a significant shift in the environment in which children, and ultimately adults, are able to understand and deal with feelings. If you are a teacher please try and get hold of a copy.

Out of the Blue

Julie Stokes, Paul Oxley

Stroud, Glos, UK: Hawthorn Press 2006, 28pp
£7.99 pb
ISBN 1 90345 871 4

Out of the Blue is a toolkit for a young bereaved person to help themselves. It contains nine detailed ideas for remembering someone who has died, as well as a list of 'top tips'. Some of these activities, such as making a jar of memories, have been widely disseminated from Winston's Wish in the past and will be familiar to experienced practitioners. The booklet is addressed directly to children and encourages them to choose the activities that may particularly appeal to them. Those who are self-motivated and looking for ideas will really benefit from this booklet. However, young people often need someone to sit alongside them and in these cases there would need to be a worker supporting the young person or within a family, say a parent with their child.

As leader of a service that supports bereaved young people, I can see that this would be a great resource to give to each of my colleagues to use alongside counselling. However, from this point of view, at £7.99 it seems rather expensive.

All titles marked * in the review section are available from Cruse. Order on line at www.cruse.org.uk; info@cruse.org.uk or tel [0]20 8939 9540

BOOK REVIEWS

Helping Kids Heal

Rebecca Carman

New York: The Bureau for At-Risk Youth/Milton Keynes, Bucks, UK/ Incentive Plus
117pp, 2004
$29.95/£27.95 pb
ISBN 1 56688 723 2

Helping Kids Heal is another toolkit, this time for counsellors and therapists. With 75 activities to help children recover from trauma and loss, it feels jam-packed with goodies. The activities are sorted thematically to help the reader move through different aspects of a young person's experience. They begin with a focus on building safety, move through expressing feelings and thoughts, and what happened, and end with looking to the future, hope and growing and giving back. Many of the ideas were new to me and I can imagine including a number of them in my work. Even activities which are familiar are presented in a slightly new and thought-provoking way.

Though the book is designed for a trained counsellor or therapist, any experienced practitioner would find it useful, though the author does recommend that anyone using the book who has not had a professional training should receive good supervision. The introductory note provides clear guidance and inspiration: these activities are meant to provide a 'portal in' for caregivers, 'like seeds in a packet, activities remain dormant until a caring adult breathes into them life and meaning'.

Someone Has Died in a Road Crash

Mary Williams, Caroline Chisholm

Huddersfield, Yorks, UK: Brake
16pp, 2006
£7.50 pb, subsequent copies £4.50

This valuable resource takes a frank and sensitive look at issues for children that may follow the death of someone in a road traffic accident. An accompanying guide for adults, not reviewed here, is also available.

The authors use two characters, Amy and Ben, to explore a range of difficult issues that may follow on from a fatality on the roads. Subjects such as seeing a dead body, organ donation, punishing dangerous drivers and what happens when someone dies are explored. In addition eight 'common feelings' (eg 'I can't get the crash out of my head') are covered in an accessible way. The information is well presented, using speech bubbles and clear, colourful illustrations throughout. I would highly recommend this as a resource for children affected by this kind of death and parts of it are universally applicable for any bereaved child.

In summary, *Children Also Grieve* is a great addition to the available resources for working with children individually, while Frank's *Good Grief* seems limited in its usefulness. Two other well-established workbooks should also be mentioned in this context: *Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine* by Diana Crossley from Winston's Wish is very colourful and encourages a creative approach with a range of activities including papier maché, while Marge Heegaard's *When Someone Very Special Dies** sticks to writing and drawing. Both offer a loose structure that may be worked through over six 'sessions' with a child but require sensitive and attentive input from an informed adult. Both offer more than *Good Grief* and may be better as pure workbooks than *Children Also Grieve*, but certainly would follow on extremely well after it. If you are looking for something to aid work with a bereaved child it would be worth obtaining both these old favourites and seeing which best suits the child and you.

It's OK to Be Sad is a 'must have' for primary school teachers. *Helping Kids Heal* is a fantastic new resource for practitioners working with bereaved and traumatised children. *Out of the Blue* does just what it says on the cover – it is a great toolkit for young people, but they may need encouragement and support to use it. *Someone Has Died in a Car Crash* is an excellent guide to read and work through with a child, particularly because it covers some difficult, and often glossed-over, issues.

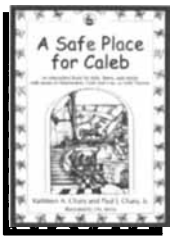
Sacha Richardson
Director of Children's Services, with help from ***Ranjit Phull****, counsellor, The Laura Centre and* ***Tania Butler****, primary school teacher*

Crossley D/Winston's Wish (2000). Stroud, Glos, UK: Hawthorn Press.
Heegaard M (1988). Minneapolis, MN, USA: Woodland Books.
Hughes S (1998). *Dogger.* London: Randon House.
Ward B (1996). *Good Grief* (under 11s, 2nd edn). London: Jessica Kingsley.

A Safe Place for Caleb

An Interactive Book for Kids, Teens and Adults

Kathleen and Paul Chara



London: Jessica Kingsley
2005, 128pp
£13.99/$22.95 pb
ISBN 1 84310 799 6

This useful text examines children's experiences of rejection, abandonment and loss within the hopeful framework of attachment theory. Sadly, many children endure multiple losses in their early years and need sensitive care in order to manage the effects of these challenging life events. The authors acknowledge how difficult this can be for parents, struggling to care for their children whilst simultaneously living through the same emotional maelstrom. Strengthening the parent–child relationship is one of the foci of the text, because the narrative of Caleb's story is designed to be read by parents and children together. The idea is that this shared activity will encourage the child to express his feelings and explore his thinking around key events in his life, thereby enhancing a mutual understanding of his experience and deepening the parent–child bond.

The child-friendly prose and a set of paper-based activities develop Caleb's symbolic journey through several disrupted attachments to the 'safe tree house'. He is equipped with four 'healing keys' to help him address the 'hurting beliefs' that prevent him from establishing relationships. This highly symbolic representation of the child's inner world presents what for many could be a very accessible route to greater insight into a child's experience of loss. I found the flowery prose style a little off-putting at times, but not enough to stop me recommending this as a useful resource for those working with 8–13 year olds.

Although particularly relevant to children who have had a series of foster placements, this resource could equally be appropriate for children who have had other sorts of losses, including bereavement. It might be most applicable for bereavement through suicide, because the rejection element is usually stronger. Similarly, it could also be relevant for bereavement through murder, particularly when one parent kills the other, because of the offending parent's culpability and the anger and confusion children often feel with that parent because he or she has destroyed the family's world. ●

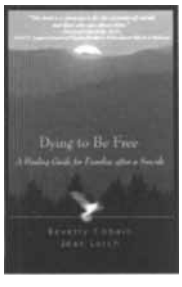
Peta Hemmings
Senior Practitioner, Barnardo's Orchard Service

Perspectives on suicide

Dying to Be Free

A Healing Guide for Families after a Suicide

Beverly Cobain, Jean Larch



Center City, MN, USA: Hazelden Foundation
2006, 150pp
£6.50/$12.95 pb
ISBN 1 59285 329 3

Although written for an American readership, this relatively short but sensitively written book speaks to a universal audience. In early chapters, Larch and Cobain (cousin of Kurt) sketch out the staggering number of lives recorded as lost through suicide, multiplying these significantly by explaining how a suicide verdict is reserved only for deaths where the evidence of premeditation is incontrovertible. Worse still, by including discussion of the number of known attempted suicides, and identifying previous attempts as one of the most significant indicators of eventual successful suicides, readers are left in little doubt about the epidemic proportions of the mental turmoil that precipitates it.

The authors skilfully weave information from established 'experts' with their own therapeutic and personal experiences to provide an accessible explanation of the motives, feelings and personal journeys of suicide attempters. This is complemented by an understated but wholly believable description of one author's own near suicide attempt. Her account illustrates how consideration for those left behind is totally eclipsed by the promise of the freedom that death offers.

Later chapters carefully describe the range of despair, anger, guilt, shame and suicidal thoughts that characterise the reactions of bereaved loved ones. Though the approach and practical guidance offered is primarily psychological, the authors draw attention to the differences in response and outcome between bereaved people and to the role of supportive social relationships in coping with such losses. The authenticity of the writing is further reinforced by frequent use of specific case examples, often using first-hand accounts of suicide attempters and of bereaved partners, children and parents.

After Suicide Loss

Coping with your Grief

Bob Baugher, Jack Jordan

Tukwila, WA, USA: The Grief Store, 2004
65pp
$10.00 pb
ISBN 0 96359 755 8

This is a brief book, readable in one sitting or easily dipped into. It contains no padding and speaks directly to people bereaved through suicide, capturing what they might be feeling without prescription or condescension. Though devoid of citations or academic referencing, it is clearly informed by contemporary research and the authors' own practice as psychologists and death educators.

The approach taken is chronological, exploring reactions from the first news of the death through the days, weeks and months to the first anniversary and beyond. It warns of potential conflict and misunderstanding between family members, of conspiracies of silence, of stigmatisation and the crisis for others in knowing how to relate to a survivor of suicide. The advice that children should be given age-appropriate information as honestly as possible is outstanding, illustrating how telling them the truth might avoid them imagining far worse and taking a silent blame and guilt upon themselves.

Valuable further reading appears at the end. The appendix includes a superb essay on the close link between mental ill-health and suicide, stressing that suicidal states are 'conditions' requiring far more medical and financial support than is currently available.

Written for an American audience, this text is nevertheless equally relevant to any English-speaking readership, and includes a substantial section of first-hand accounts from a number of 'survivors'. The book contains practical advice for people bereaved through suicide and for those who seek to offer them support. ●

Gordon Riches
Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Derby University

All colour funeral book

We Need to Talk About the Funeral

101 Practical Ways to Commemorate and Celebrate a Life

Jane Morrell, Simon Smith

Bedlinog, Glamorgan UK: Accent Press
2007
208pp
£14.99 pb
ISBN 1 89929 631 X

Books about funerals do not sell well, because people don't like to talk about the subject in advance and when the time comes they have no time to seek out and buy a book, let alone read it. If any funeral book could, conceivably, break this impasse, it is *We Need to Talk About the Funeral*. Beautifully illustrated in colour, it is packed with practical information and ideas about both the funeral ceremony and preparing for it.

The pictures as much as the text will open eyes as to what is possible. As a young man, I learnt to cook only because – unlike other cookery books at the time – the *Hamlyn All Colour Cook Book* showed in full colour what each recipe could finally look like. This book could likewise give the British public the vision to commission better funerals, and might even end up on display on the coffee table! British funeral directors are obsessed with coffins and cars, and crematoria managers with technology. You only have to flick through this book to see how much more varied and personal the hardware, notably the flowers, could be (Morrell is a florist). Crucially, though, there are also lots of pictures and ideas about people and ceremonies, showing hardware as servant, not master.

As noted in the *Funeral Service Journal* (December 2006; **121**[12]: 94-96), the book contains minor factual errors that unnecessarily damage its credibility within the funeral industry; and it could contain many more positive ideas for cremation rites. But the book's overall concept is brilliant. If any book can get mourners and pre-mourners talking about the funeral, this is it. ●

Tony Walter
Professor of Death Studies, Bath University