

- Why the client thinks they have been referred? (Are they all the same?)
- What else is happening or has happened that might affect this problem?
- How would the parents/family/individual normally deal with this?
- Have you become more attached to one idea than the other?

Systemic family therapy can broaden our thinking when working with individuals

and families, but its principles and ideas can also be applied to professionals as it is important to understand the context and beliefs of professionals in teams and how those might be impacting on the team and the family. ●

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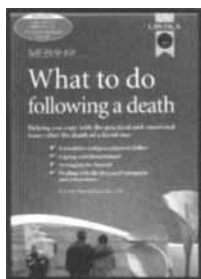
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## REVIEWS

### \*What to Do Following a Death

#### Cruse Bereavement Care



London: Lawpack  
2007  
56pp + 3 sheets  
£9.99 (pack)  
ISBN 1 90526 115 4

In the first shock of bereavement, some sort of guide to the administrative practicalities and the process of arranging a funeral can be very welcome. Designed for a UK-wide readership, this self-help kit consists of a manual and three sheets tucked into an A4 card folder.

The manual opens with a guide to understanding feelings after a death and goes on to discuss the tasks to be undertaken. The sheets summarise the text, with a checklist of the necessary actions, a funeral planner in questionnaire format, and useful notes on coping with bereavement. All the text is in a generous type size and in easy-to-understand terms.

The closest comparison is with *What to Do when Someone Dies* (Harris, 2006), published by Which?, the UK consumer association. This provides more detail on the practicalities in a compact A5, 220-page guide. It is slightly more expensive, and covers Great Britain but not Northern Ireland. Two free UK government booklets, D49 (DWP, 2006) and D49S (DWP 2005) express the bare facts for England, Wales and Scotland clearly but do not cover emotional issues.

The emphasis is different in the Lawpack kit, which has addressed the issue of bereavement in greater depth. There is a short section on grief in the

Which? guide, but you have to seek it out at the end of the first section, and it is less comprehensive. If the reader is looking for a very factual, business-like guide, the Which? Guide is probably better value, but for those seeking a rather gentler and more sympathetic entry to the tasks to be undertaken – or for those who live in Northern Ireland – the Lawpack guide is more appropriate.

#### Anne Barber

##### Chairman of the Institute of Civil Funerals

DWP (2006). *What to Do After a Death in England and Wales (D49)*. London: DWP.

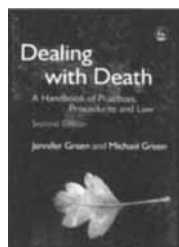
DWP (2005). *What to Do After a Death in Scotland (D49S)*. London: DWP.

HARRIS P (2006). *What to Do When Someone Dies*. London: Which?

\*Order on line from Cruse Bereavement Care at [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) or tel (0044)20 8939 9533

### Dealing with Death (2nd edn) A Handbook of Practices, Procedures and Law

Jennifer Green, Michael Green



London, UK: Jessica Kingsley, 2006  
352pp  
£40.00/\$75 pb  
ISBN 1 84310 381 8

This authoritative and informative handbook on UK legal, technical and forensic procedures has become a standard for professionals who deal with death, dying and disposal. The new edition adds a section outlining the implications for practice of a range of religious beliefs and death rites, reflecting the increasing cultural and spiritual diversity in Europe.

The text also takes full account of the forthcoming major changes in British laws and protocols being implemented

following recommendations by the Shipman and Alder Hey inquiries. These arose following widespread public concern over the ease with which Harold Shipman, a medical general practitioner, had concealed the murder of at least 15 patients, and emerging evidence of the retention after autopsy of large numbers of organs without the relatives' knowledge or consent. The authors draw on their combined experience in public health and forensic pathology, not just to be informative but also to provide clear and critical reflections, including regretting the decline in the practice of autopsy.

While much of the factual elaboration was clearly for reference, I found myself surprisingly (should that perhaps be morbidly?) fascinated by some of the detail, such as the natural stages of deterioration of corpses. The historical and contextual explanations of forthcoming legal changes greatly helped my understanding of the principles as well as the procedures to be applied. Whilst the text is specific to the UK context, the discussion of issues around, for instance, euthanasia and assisted suicide refer to attitudes and practices internationally.

I recommend this as a valuable reference text for UK professionals such as lawyers, police, funeral directors, clergy, and for many health and social care professionals, but with the minor caveat that psychosocial care is given scant attention. Indeed, bereavement – surely a part of practice in dealing with death? – is only allotted five pages. This was disappointingly prescriptive and outdated, but the real surprise is that in an otherwise useful appendix of organisations, Cruse Bereavement Care is completely omitted! ●

Jonathan Hartley

Consultant, trainer and therapist

# REVIEWS

## BOOKS

### \*The Early Days of Grieving (2<sup>nd</sup> edn)

Derek Nuttall



London: Darton,  
Longman and Todd  
2006, 75pp  
£5.99 pb  
ISBN 0 23252 644 3

This latest, updated edition of a classic text first published in 1991 is aimed at those who are newly bereaved. It covers a range of issues, from reactions immediately following death to decisions that have to be made, moving on, meeting others and so on. It is a small book and the topics are well indexed, so it would be easy to pick up and dip into without the necessity of concentrating on a long chapter, and no prior knowledge of grief is assumed.

In places I found the text sympathetic rather than helpful and would have welcomed some experienced advice. For example, while acknowledging how difficult anniversaries and events such as Christmas can be, the author offers no ideas about how people could plan for or deal with these. Other areas, however, such as looking after yourself and making major decisions, (eg moving house) are sensitively handled with some good suggestions and examples.

Overall I found this a useful little book to have available for the newly bereaved.

**\*Order on line from Cruse Bereavement Care at [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) or tel 004420 8939 9533**

### Griefkeeping

Harold Ivan Smith



New York: Crossroad  
Publishing/Dublin, Ireland:  
Veritas, 2004  
251pp  
\$17.47/€19.99 pb  
ISBN 0 82452 258 3

The meaning of the title of this book is explained in the opening chapter, 'The right to keep your grief'. Smith suggests that, rather than getting over it, we grow by taking our time and 'keeping' our grief. This idea is supported by numerous case histories but the people concerned are presidents and celebrities, and almost exclusively American. Although some of those mentioned are internationally known, many

are not, so the stories will lose some of their impact for non-USA readers unfamiliar with the contexts.

It is not clear whether this text is intended as a resource for bereaved people, or for those interested in American culture and the impact of grief on celebrities and politicians. Although it makes some points that grieving people and their supporters might find useful, it would not be appropriate for those who are newly bereaved as these points are not clearly or concisely stated. As a collection of accounts of grief relating to an extensive range of people from a variety of backgrounds, it certainly has wide coverage: over 400 people are mentioned in the various case histories. ●

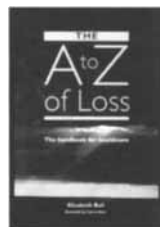
Janet Wilson

Lecturer in Nursing, Sheffield University

### The A-Z of Loss

The handbook for healthcare

Elizabeth Bell



Abingdon, Oxon, UK:  
Radcliffe, 2005  
141pp  
£19.95/\$39.95 pb  
ISBN 1 85775 653 3

Most of the books reviewed for *Bereavement Care* are specifically about bereavement. This book is unusual in that, rather than dealing with the sequelae of death, it considers 26 examples of widely varied loss situations. Loss, or rather the sense of loss, has to be one of the hardest areas for human beings to deal with, especially when the loss is less obvious, such as loss of dignity, status, privacy or opportunity. Each scenario presented here alerts health professionals to the need for sensitivity, empathy, and a holistic approach in everyday practice.

The writer is an educational psychologist who has taught psychology healthcare at Leeds University. It is clear that she has great insight and depth of understanding of the human condition. The book covers a range of subjects, from anxiety, guilt, fear, trust to zest for life.

For each letter of the alphabet, there are three sections: a scenario depicting some form of loss, psychological analysis of the situation, and questions for personal development. Only the letter 'U' (for understanding) deals with bereavement, citing the story of a family's struggle to accept the death of their daughter. The psychological issues raised are apt and thoughtful, with reflective questions and suggestions for health professionals to consider.

This book has succeeded in providing much food

for thought on various loss situations, invaluable advice and suggestions which are accessible and sensible. For educators, I believe it is a useful teaching aid to help professionals to critically appraise their work and think more deeply about the effects they may have on patients and their families. ●

Ann Dent

Honorary Research Fellow, Bristol University

## VIDEO

### The Gifts of Grief

Nancee Sobonya (producer)



Oakland, CA, USA: Shining  
Light Productions, 2005  
52 mins  
\$59.00/£30.00  
[www.giftsofgrief.com](http://www.giftsofgrief.com)  
(click PBS button for reduced  
price for readers)

This is an interesting video which approaches grief in a different way. In it, seven articulate people describe their experience of bereavement and what has been positive about its impact on their lives. The producer has chosen to portray the participant's personalities, self-motivation and inner strengths, rather than look at any possible problems or interventions.

One of the strengths of this resource is its use of different age groups, cultures, circumstances and backgrounds. The varied material is well put together, though I found the background music distracting. Some of the deaths were expected, others not, but the differing effects this might have had on the interviewees' ability to cope with the bereavement is not explored. In some cases the participants acknowledge anger and guilt but these, and their effect on the grieving process, clearly need to be looked at in more depth. The looking-back approach highlights the way the interviewees dealt with their feelings over time, for some maturity bringing an understanding of grief while for others, emotions blended into their personality.

While deeply acknowledging the courage of the seven participants, I cannot help but have some reservations about the 'gifts' they have passed on. This is a selected group, who are intellectualising, and I was left wondering if some are still working through their grief. Nonetheless, this video would be excellent teaching material, encouraging discussion and raising questions as to how best to help all those bereaved, taking into account variations in personality and circumstances. ●

Enone Vincent

Psychiatric social worker