### ABSTRACTS

# Words that make a difference': communication in bereavement Holmberg L. Journal of Loss and Trauma 2007; 12(1):11-31

The author is a professor of education in Sweden and this article is a personal reflection on a diary she kept for one year after her 38-year-old son's

death from cancer.

She identifies a number of themes in her diary guilt, lack of knowledge, physical breakdown, lack of control, anxiety, obsession and stigma. She describes the manifestations of each and how she was supported by the provision of information, advice about control, empathy and shared experiences. In particular, she describes her physical breakdown and the ensuing support from her GP,

her relationship with her counsellor, participation in a self-help group and the support of a loyal friend. Such a personal yet reflective perspective could help bereaved people to realise that similar intense, sometimes seemingly irrelevant experiences, are normal responses to bereavement. Her comments on support are relevant to anyone helping bereaved people in a variety of settings, including the world of work.

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