

explored such as: after lengthy illness; unexpected death due to accident or illness, murder, manslaughter, suicide, and military, which may complicate grief processes.

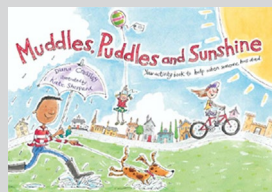
There is a 'framework,' on how to support grieving teenagers, which highlights the importance of adults not shying away from honest, open, and educative communication about grief and loss, and of goodbye rituals and the sharing and the keeping alive memories of the deceased. There are also suggestions about how physical activities, writing, music and art can help with difficult and confusing emotions in a non-threatening way. Three sub-sections are specifically for parents, schools, and teenagers themselves. The latter is through a comic-style approach which quotes teenagers wanting to share their experiences as to what they found helpful during their own grief process and how friends can help. This 5-page section can be downloaded for free from www.winstonswish.org.uk as a pdf file.

The generous peppering of direct quotations from teenagers and adults can be a relief in that it shows one is not alone and that others have similar thoughts and difficulties. The section on 'Talking with teenagers' not only illustrates empathic suggestions for responding to a young person's grief but also gives examples of insensitive responses as experienced by teenagers. There is also signposting under 'Important Issues' for when teenagers may need more specialist support.

At the back of the booklet there are not only useful reading recommendations for adults, but also fiction and non-fiction books specifically for teenagers. There's also an extensive list of organisations that can give information and support about bereavement across all ages and different types of death. ■

Nina Ruff

Volunteer with the charity Grief Encounter – Therapeutic Play Counsellor



Muddles, puddles and sunshine: your activity book to help when someone dies

Diana Crossley

Stroud, Glos: Hawthorne Press
2000
32pp
£10.95
ISBN: 978 1 903458 96 9

It is well known among child therapists that the natural language of young children is through doing and playing rather than the spoken word, particularly when they

have not cognitively developed the vocabulary to describe difficult emotional feelings. The death of a family member or someone close is a traumatic event for anyone, but for young children it can be immensely confusing. Young lives can be devastatingly turned upside down, with financial and environmental implications, particularly if a parent dies.

This book can be seen as a little ray of sunshine in a young child's shattered world. It is designed to be shared with an adult the child trusts. This does not have to be a parent or professional, but the book recommends, if possible, parental discussion at some point. At the back, there are suggested guidelines as to how to use this activity book with a bereaved child. Although aimed at primary school age children, it could be used with older children depending upon maturity.

The reasons I recommend this book are:

- Crossley's text is very engaging and easy to follow but this belies a seriousness behind the activities. It enables children to find meaning in their loss, get in touch with and express emotions, and facilitate continuing bonds with the deceased through various memory activities;
- The illustrations are delightfully engaging, full of colour and vitality, adopting a comic-book style. The characters Bee and Bear guide the child through various activities involving writing, drawing and making and, in doing so, sharing about their loss and ensuing worries;
- The strong emphasis is on children having fun while doing inexpensive activities. Crossley thoughtfully uses metaphorical activities as leverage to deeper processing. Some examples of this are making scary spiders, biscuit feeling faces, a feeling volcano, a friendship bracelet, a jar of memories, a salt dough bear, a first aid kit, a fantastic photo frame, planting seeds and ending with a memory box in which to also place this activity book.

The underlying message is that although the bereaved child will have difficult feelings, it is fine to have good times too.

Another activity book to help children with a family bereavement is the *Grief Encounter Workbook* (2014) (recommended ages 8-15 but not excluding older children) written by Shelley Gilbert MBE, founder of the charity, Grief Encounter, who was made an orphan by the time she was 9 years old. ■

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Gilbert S (2014). *Grief Encounter Workbook* (4th ed) London: Grief Encounter Publications.