to have someone with them who had been through the same experiences.

It was not easy, but I found that these two incidents helped me to come to terms with medical practice again. I was able to ignore the trivialities and I found myself listening to people more. It became obvious to me how alike we all were. The simple act of listening seemed to help me almost as much as my patients. It was only later that a young Baptist minister made the simple but obvious explanation that these two dying people and their families had allowed me to give something again. After many months of battling against my son's illness it seems I had lost the capacity to give. And yet giving is such an essential part of human life in general and medicine in particular. As medicine becomes increasingly scientific the individual doctor may well find that his ability to give to his patients becomes progressively more difficult. It may well be that he and his patients will suffer as a consequence. Whether he is aware of it is, of course, a different matter.

* * *

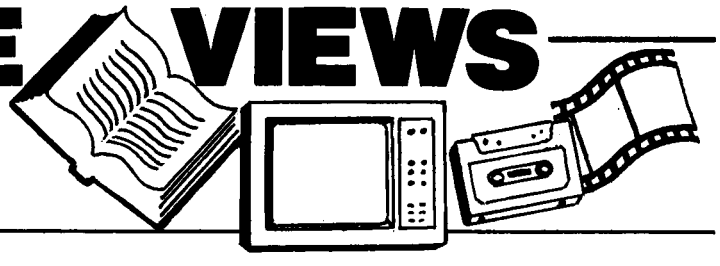
Where do I go from here? Some would argue that there is a message in my experiences that comes from someone greater than all of us. I think it is too soon to say that it was my 'road to Damascus'.

What it has reminded me to do is to concentrate on people rather than on illnesses. It may be that by doing so we may actually have more effect on the illness itself. Despite our natural desire for material things and our ego trips down the roads of organisation and scientific discovery in medicine, we must remember our patients' feelings and fears. It puts me in mind of the philosophy of the ancient Greek school of medicine.

To cure, occasionally.
To relieve, often.
To comfort, always.

It may be that as a profession we should remember this more often.

REVIEWS



DEATH AND DYING IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

Marian S. Pyles. Publishers: Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company. 1988. U.K. Agents Bailey Brothers & Swinfen Ltd., Folkestone.

This highly priced, slim volume (172 pages) describes a selection of books written for children which include the subject of death. It is divided into five headings: folklore, the death of a pet, a friend, a relative and finally one's own death. Writing on folklore the author says (p. 31) 'as children read . . . they begin to realise that death is a natural part of life . . . they also begin to realise just how dangerous a place the world is. Finally they will begin to realise that mortality only makes life sweeter. Struggle, adherence to principles, and love makes the difference'. After the first chapter on folklore, which includes some of the well known children's classics but omits many more (for example, Beatrix Potter doesn't get a mention), the literature surveyed is almost entirely contemporary American fiction for children. Indeed in one of the few references to an English book, 'Dance on my Grave' by Aiden Chambers, the author says that the rather large number of British expressions would represent a stumbling block resulting in a limited audience for this book.

We learn in the preface that the author developed this book while teaching a course on children's literature. Unfortunately she does not say to whom the course was addressed. One guesses it is one of many such courses taught at American universities and presumably is aimed at undergraduates who may eventually become teachers and/or parents. British teachers and parents will find it of limited use but may browse through it for some ideas for children undergoing similar experiences. A more useful list can be found at the back of the schools' pack 'Good Grief' (Ward and Houghton) reviewed in 'Bereavement Care' Vol. 7 No. 2 (Summer, 1988), which has the advantage of being graded for age, and for the older literature the chapter by Ross in 'Explaining Death to Children' ed. Grollman, Beacon Press, Boston 1967, should be consulted.

DR. DORA BLACK
Consultant Child Psychiatrist and
Vice Chairman of Cruse

EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF CHILDHOOD LEUKEMIA— A HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

The Leukemia Association of America, National Headquarters, 733 Third Avenue, New York. Price not stated.

This handbook tries to help parents of children diagnosed with leukaemia to explore the variety of emotions and problems arising from the feelings they encounter when they have a very sick child. Throughout, it reminds parents that the majority of children do not die of leukaemia these days, although there may be a very hard struggle ahead.

The book has a section for helping the parents with the feelings they might have at the time of diagnosis. The difficulties of parents and the rest of their family and friends are looked at in terms of the relationships that existed before and the effects of the impact of the child's illness on these. There are plenty of commonsense suggestions about trying to weigh up the situation as it exists. The book suggests that every family has its own individual way of coping with bad news. It also encourages parents to look for their main sources of support to help them meet the new demands.

The second part of the book, subtitled 'You and Your Children', first looks at the healthy child at different stages, and at the child's understanding of illness and death. It then reviews seriously ill children and how, depending on their developmental level, they react to their illness and to the possibility of death. At the same time, it discusses the importance of communicating with sick children about what is happening to them so that they can feel fully supported by their parents and able to discuss things openly with them, especially at the time of diagnosis and during treatment.

There is a lot about the child's behaviour in the family when he or she goes home, and parents are encouraged to on treating the child as normally as possible. The importance of continuing with the child's education is discussed, as are the possible difficulties that may arise with teachers and peers, or because of absence while the child is in hospital.

The last section, 'If Death Must Come', acknowledges the fact that although the book has emphasised life and living, there is still a large number of children who die. The emphasis is on how important it is to communicate, and the book lists various topics to be discussed with children in preparation for death, depending on their age and readiness to talk. The parents are encouraged to be aware of the important subjects for both parent and child to feel at ease with before the death.

I found this book clearly written with sound advice for parents and families with a sick child. The emphasis on life should help parents take a positive view about sorting out any problems with their child and the family during the illness. However, as it obviously has to touch on death and hospitals, it will be painful for any parent to read, although it will also be of considerable help especially as it is written in fairly uncomplicated, jargon-free language.

DR. ROWENA GURA
Child Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London

MY BOOK FOR KIDS WITH CANSUR

Jason Gaes. Aberdeen, South Dakota, USA: Mellus & Peterson Publishing Inc. $11.95.

Subtitled 'A Child's Autobiography of Hope', this book is written by a child who was diagnosed as having cancer when he was six. Two years later, when he was apparently cured, he wrote the book to tell other children who were suffering about his own experiences, with various tips on how to cope with the long and, at times, painful process of treatment.

The book is full of hope and encouragement for other children with cancer, explaining to them that there are many people who have lived through the experience, like himself. He explains some of the bad things about having cancer, such as being scared, but talks about being comforted by his mother. He suggests that any child can phone him. He tells other children that it is OK to cry and not to worry about losing their hair if they have chemotherapy, as good friends would not

laugh anyway. At one point he touches on the fact that some children may die, but in his own way he explains that heaven is probably a nice place to be and only scary because we have never been there, and they will be joining all their dead relatives that they haven't seen in years, who are up there already.

Though sad, this book was very appealing to read and concentrates on how to cope with living with cancer rather than on dying, of which he obviously has no experience. Written in the simple language of an eight-year-old, it has a directness that may be very helpful to a child going through the same experience, and he certainly makes a lot of good suggestions about the best way to cope with the treatment. It gives carers, too, good insight into the way a child who is going through a very frightening experience feels.

DR. ROWENA GURA
Child Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London

WHEN SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL DIES

Marge Heegaard. Minneapolis: Woodland Press. $4.95 (discount for bulk orders).

This book is written with the full expectation, in the words of the author, that 'children can learn to cope with grief'. It is aimed at children between six and twelve. At the beginning there is an introduction for adults to help the child through the process of coping with death and grief, and a separate introduction headed 'to grieving children'. After this the book is divided into six parts which lead children through the process of grieving successfully by learning various things about life and death which they can explore by doing their own drawings. The drawings by the children are done only by suggestion of the area they should be thinking about, but with no precise instruction. This way they are encouraged, with the help of several positive statements, to express their own feelings and not only to look at death, but think of themselves in terms of the dead person and all their feelings for life and living.

The author is an art therapist who has worked with children and adults in grief counselling and has learnt that by drawing, children are able to express a lot of the feelings for which they may not have the vocabulary. In the introduction she also suggests a list of additional reading for each section of the book that can be read to or by the child. These help to provide more ideas about the section the child is working on. In this way the children are encouraged to let ideas come into their minds that fit with their own before they start to draw.

This concept seems a good one for children who are grieving for someone, although it may be difficult for an adult with no training to be able to help the child through the book, particularly if they themselves are grieving. The author suggests at the beginning that if adults are grieving as well, they should try to get some support for themselves at the same time, and that this in itself would help the child.

DR. ROWENA GURA
Child Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London

FACILITATOR GUIDE FOR WHEN SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL DIES

Marge Heegaard. Minneapolis: Woodland Press. $15.00.

This guide goes with the above book by Marge Heegaard and gives advice for setting up and running a group for children who are all grieving. In the groups they use the book 'When Someone Very Special Dies' with the drawing as their basic framework. The beginning of the book is rather confusing. Is it for art therapists, other professionals concerned with child care, or lay people who have an interest? There is a good section on children's concepts of death based on Piaget's developmental stages, followed by developmentally appropriate death education. There follow other sections discussing the background of the problems of death for the child and the use of art therapy in bereavement.

The book is clear and easy to follow, with many good ideas. Some of these would help an individual parent who wanted to work through 'When Someone Very Specal Dies' with a child, but for groups I feel that someone with a lot more experience in child work would be necessary in order to manage a group of bereaved children of varying ages. For such a person, this guide would be extremely helpful.

DR. ROWEN GURA
Child Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London

Cruse News

Cruse is the national United Kingdom voluntary organisation for bereavement care

Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR, England (tel. 01-940 4818)

Director: Derek Nuttall Training Officer: Nicholas Tyndall
Information Officer: Wendy Wilson

Derek Nuttall

Cruse's Chairman, Dr. Colin Murray Parkes, writes:

'It is with great regret that the Council of Cruse learned of Derek's intention to resign his post as Director of Cruse as soon as a suitable successor can be found and trained up to replace him. While accepting his decision, the Council expressed their satisfaction with the way Derek has fulfilled his many roles and their sincere gratitude for all that he has done for Cruse'.

Anyone interested in applying for the post of Director is invited to write for details to Dr. Colin Murray Parkes, Chairman of Cruse, Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR.

Cruse 30th Anniversary

This year Cruse celebrates the 30th anniversary of its founding in 1959. Among the many Pearl Anniversary events throughout the United Kingdom is a special day in Cardiff including a service in Llandaff Cathedral and an evening concert. This will take place during Cruse National Awareness Week, the first week in October. Cruse in Northern Ireland has organised a Day Conference, also in October.

Westminster Abbey Service

Also to celebrate the Pearl Anniversary there will be a Cruse Evensong at Westminster Abbey at 5 p.m. on 10th October, open to all. A buffet supper will be held afterwards; tickets for the supper are £6 and can be obtained from Cruse House.

New Branches

New Cruse Branches have opened at Mansfield, Bridlington, Dover and District, Newtown, Wirral, Bournemouth, Rushden, North Warwickshire and Weston-super-Mare.

BEREAVEMENT CARE JOURNAL

is for bereavement counsellors and all who wish to deepen their understanding of bereavement. It is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be lent, resold, reproduced in part or in entirety, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's consent.

The editors welcome advertisements and inserts, but do not necessarily associate themselves with the views of the advertisers, or books advertised.

Editors: Colin Murray Parkes MD DPM FRCPsych
Dora Black MB ChB FRCPsych DPM

Managing Editor: Patricia Scowen MA SRN HV

Editorial Office and Advertisements: Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR (Tel. 01-940 4818)

1989 Subscriptions—U.K.: individuals £6.00, libraries and institutions £11.00, Cruse workers £4.50. All inclusive of postage and packing. **Overseas rates: Europe,** individuals £7.00, libraries and institutions £12.00. **All other countries:** individuals £8.25, libraries and institutions £13.25. All inclusive of air mail. Kindly remit by sterling draft payable in London. Some back numbers available at £1.10 per copy, plus 20p postage (inland). Free index on request. Offprints of single articles available at 40p.

"Bereavement Care" is published three times a year in Spring, Summer and Winter. An index to 1988 and 1989, volumes 7 and 8, will appear in the Winter issue 1989.

Copyright Cruse—Bereavement Care 1989

Printed by E. H. Baker & Co. Ltd., 86 Lower Mortlake Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2JH. Ref. 85947