The Association for Death Education and Counseling (Hartford, CT, USA)

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President of ADEC

The Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) is a multi-disciplinary professional organisation dedicated to promoting excellence in death education, bereavement counselling and care of the dying. Based on theory and quality research, ADEC provides information, support and resources to its multicultural membership and, through them, to the public. Founded in 1976, today ADEC is a 1700-member organisation. Its aims have remained the same throughout but, over the years, it has been possible to develop increasingly sophisticated ways of achieving these goals.

ADEC set up its first professional certification programme in 1981 to serve the needs of consumers and provide standards of quality. Recently we have created a new professional certification programme and, as I write, the first exam is being conducted. The new qualification, Certified in Thanatology: Death, Dying and Bereavement (CT), represents our efforts to recognise practitioners and educators in the discipline of thanatology. The CT indicates a mastery of a core body of knowledge in both death education and bereavement counselling that has been developed by topic experts. Candidates have met criteria that include either a Bachelor's degree and two years of verified related experience, or a Master's or Doctorate degree and one year of verified related experience. Finally, candidates must accumulate 60 hours of education in thanatology. Certification will continue to raise professional standards, enhance career opportunities and protect the public by enabling clients to identify qualified practitioners in the field.

Educational opportunities abound in ADEC. The annual conference, which has been running for 25 years, now offers keynote addresses, panels, invited speakers and concurrent workshops in a learning environment dedicated to professionals. Prior to the conference, we run training sessions taught by leading experts in the field. Moreover, we have developed and produced three CD-ROM programmes in the areas of children's grief, psychosocial issues in children and adolescents with terminal illness, and adolescent suicide. The CD-ROM format makes these programmes readily available to members and other professionals, offering continuing education opportunities.

ADEC also offers a number of networking benefits to its membership. Our Human Resource Network lists the names of members in every state of the USA and some foreign countries. Special interest groups offer support and information about specific areas such as violence, trauma and spiritual care. A mentor program and 'International Buddy' service assist with introductions inside ADEC and abroad. Eager, talented and dedicated students are encouraged and nurtured by ADEC through annual awards of excellence, for which candidates compete by writing papers. Undergraduates and graduates enter separately for an award in each category, and a third is offered to all levels of student for a paper dedicated to cross-cultural and individual differences in ways of dealing with dying and death.

At ADEC, we seek to foster our members' ability to understand world views through our Multicultural Committee and People of Colour Forum. With a growing multicultural membership, we are lucky to have people from diverse backgrounds who are active in promoting understanding, education and support of all races and cultures.

Finally, the ADEC newsletter, *The Forum*, has grown into a themed publication of articles that serve to educate and inform on all issues related to dying, death and bereavement. Recent issues offered insights into grief and loss in the workplace, grandparent's grief, and support for grieving children and adolescents.

As ADEC has matured as a professional organisation, it has retained that special essence of its origins - the warm, caring atmosphere and collegiate relationships shared by its members working to provide support to the dying and the bereaved. It offers a 'home' to thanatology educators, practitioners, and researchers. Shirley Scott, a long-time member noted: 'In ADEC, I have grown up professionally over the past 26 years with the assistance of many leaders in the field. ADEC provided me with opportunities to learn from the best, validate what I learned on my own, share my expertise with newcomers, and forge many warm and lasting friendships'.

To contact ADEC, write to 342 North Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06117-2507, USA; ☎ (001) 860 586-7533; website www.adec.org. BC

BOOK REVIEWS

GRIEF, MOURNING AND DEATH RITUAL

Jenny Hockey, Jeanne Katz, Neil Small (eds)
Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2001, pp. 286, £21.99 pb ISBN 0335 20501 1

This edited collection brings together critical discussion of psychological theories of grief with anthropological and sociological studies. It attempts to break down the distinction between grief as an inner emotion and mourning as socially required behaviour.

There are three sections: on grief, on mourning, and on funeral and commemorative rites. Each section starts with a substantial critical and theoretical review, followed by short easy-to-read empirical chapters on topics such as grief in an old person's home, supporting bereaved children at school, grief in the coroner's inquest, emotional aspects of staffing the Child Death Helpline, the language of bereavement care, changes in the funeral industry, and the effects of mobility on Hindu death rituals. This brings into focus sites of mourning too often ignored - the school, the old people's home, the inquest, the cemetery. In so doing it brings together the inner world of feelings and the very material world of grave inscriptions, crematoria, and school classrooms.

Readers of *Bereavement Care* may want to pick and choose which chapters to read. Overall, the book gives a good feel for recent sociological and anthropological research into bereavement, and has similarities with Sheila Payne and Sandra Hall's *Loss and Bereavement*[1] and my own *On Bereavement*[2]. As an edited collection, this new book is both more varied and more fragmented. For example, the editors' desire to use Michel Foucault to understand grief is not really followed through. BC

Tony Walter
Course Director in Death and Society

1. Payne S, Horn S (eds). Loss and Bereavement. Maidenhead, UK: OUP, 1999.
2. Walter T. On Bereavement – The Culture of Grief. Maidenhead, UK: OUP, 1999.

ADVANCE NOTICE

International Conference

The 7th International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society will be hosted by Cruse Bereavement Care

on 12-15 July 2005
at King's College, London

Further information to follow