

# Compassionate Ottawa

## Ottawa, une collectivité compatissante

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Photo: Brigham Young University Magazine

Dying, Death, Loss & Grief:  
Building a Shared Language for School Communities

Fin de vie, mort, perte et deuil:  
Construire un langage commun pour les communautés scolaires

Literature Search

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1 October 2018

The literature search is a project deliverable and was funded in part by a grant from the Ottawa Community Foundation.

## The Assignment (pour le texte français voir page 4)

The aim of Compassionate Ottawa's Schools Project is to introduce into schools a shared language (and resources) to support school communities in a dialogue with staff, students, educators and parents on the subject of dying, death, loss and grief.

The literature review supplements a similar initiative three years ago by the Children & Youth Grief Network of Peel Region, Ontario (download/view at Canadian Virtual Hospice: <https://goo.gl/WDounN>) and encompassed a search of both English and French language journals in the fields of end-of-life care, mental health, social work, etc. Academia, government and non-government sources, and not-for-profit agencies or services were also identified. The principle criteria was to identify evidenced-based data and information.

The literature on grief and bereavement is extensive, less so, however, in the context of culturally and linguistically diverse populations. There is also a paucity of French language articles/studies. Children's experiences of loss and separation not related to death (e.g., death of a pet, divorce, relocation, etc., etc.) are covered extensively in books, the lay press, and on a great many websites, less so in the literature.

The review focused on the period 2000-2018, primarily to reflect "current think," and is broken down into several categories:

Death Education (p.7)	Grief Across Cultures (p.27)
Children's Experiences of Loss & Separation (p.13)	Academic Performance (p.28)
Living With Life-Limiting/Threatening Illness (p.14)	Issue Specific (p.29)
Grief & Bereavement (p.17)	Conference Abstracts (p.31)
	"Grey" Literature (p.33) <sup>1</sup>

1. Materials and research produced by organizations outside of the traditional commercial or academic publishing and distribution channels, for example, non-government organizations.

During the course of the literature a number of potential resources and sources of information were identified. These are listed as an Appendix (p.35).

The full text of an article or study is not always available online, in which case a fee or subscription may be the only access option. An alternative is to contact the corresponding author requesting a copy of the article or study in question. Depending on the nature of the request authors may look favorably to a request for the review of their article coming from the not-for-profit sector. Requesting a copy of an article for information purposes is a fairly straightforward proposition. Author permission would be required if the intent is to circulate/distribute – or reproduce in whole or in part – the article of interest.

*Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. Henri J.M. Nouwen (1932-1996)*

## Overview of Findings (pour le texte français voir page 5)

Not surprisingly, there is a broad consensus among educators – and among other school personnel, e.g., nurses and social workers – that school communities need to take a pro-active stance in order to more effectively support schoolchildren experiencing loss and separation as a result of the death of a family member, loved one or friend. And, concurrently, to work with school personnel in developing the necessary skills and resources to better equip them in providing emotional and practical support. This is clearly emerging as a universal, public health issue.

Several studies focus on the importance of initiating a dialogue with students on a broad front. As part of school curricula, social studies, for example, should encompass discussion of ageing, elder and end-of-life care – and, specifically, the experience of dying and death. Research and anecdotal evidence, however, indicates a high level of discomfort with openly discussing these issues. Adults in general are often challenged about how to engage children and young people in a dialogue about end of life, reflecting a traditional belief in shielding children from life's realities, which may have serious consequences for the present and future well-being of young minds. Children are unencumbered by the complexities that invariably develop in adult relationships over time; their history with the deceased person has often been shorter, less complicated – with less “emotional baggage.”

While expressing empathy and commitment to serve the best interests of students, school personnel often acknowledge that they feel ill-prepared to address the unmet emotional needs of bereaved students. A full appreciation of the implications of a student's sense of loss and separation is not uncommon, even though deterioration in academic performance and patterns in behavior are common tell tale signs.

“Death education,” and grief and bereavement support, as an integral part of a school's curriculum has gained considerable attention, in part due to the increasing incidence of student suicide and public concern for the safety of students in light of increased violence in schools, the repercussions of which can be a profound impact on the general welfare and emotional well-being of the school population. Several studies point to the need to also consider the emotional well-being of teachers and other school personnel.

Support for students living with a life-limiting or life-threatening illness, and also those with developmental and intellectual disabilities, acknowledges different needs, with much research acknowledging the critical importance to this student population of maintaining, for example, friendships, social networks, and peer support. Controversial issues include school policies *vis-à-vis* do-not-attempt-resuscitation orders and the highly publicised medical assistance in dying.

Communication is perhaps the most common barrier to be overcome. Several studies describe existing or potential interventions and strategies that address this, acknowledging the potential for psychological and behavioral problems among young people experiencing death of a family member or loved one. The importance of peer support is underscored by many researchers.

There is a wealth of information and opinions, notably on the Internet, addressing the unmet needs of students experiencing loss and separation. Compared to many other countries, however, notably Scandinavia and the U.K., in Canada the research community-at-large has developed little by way of evidenced-based research. Research to more effectively articulate the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse school populations is under-researched.

*How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these. **George Washington Carver (1864-1943)***

## L'assignation (translation of "The Assignment")

Le projet des écoles d'Ottawa, une collectivité compatissante, a pour but d'introduire dans les écoles un langage commun (et des ressources) pour appuyer les communautés scolaires à amorcer un dialogue avec le personnel, les élèves, les éducatrices et éducateurs, et les parents au sujet de la fin de vie, de la mort, de la perte et du deuil.

L'analyse documentaire vient compléter une initiative similaire entreprise il y a trois ans par le Children & Youth Grief Network de la Région de Peel, en Ontario (disponible sur le site du Portail canadien en soins palliatifs au [http://www.virtualhospice.ca/fr\\_CA/Utilities/Search.aspx?q=ashpole](http://www.virtualhospice.ca/fr_CA/Utilities/Search.aspx?q=ashpole)) et qui comprenait une recherche des revues françaises et anglaises dans les domaines des soins de fin de vie, de la santé mentale, du travail social, etc. Des sources académiques, gouvernementales et non-gouvernementales ont également été identifiées. L'identification de données et de renseignements fondés sur des éléments factuels en était le critère principal.

Il existe un grand nombre d'ouvrages sur le deuil, cependant il y en a moins qui sont orientés vers des populations de langues et de cultures diverses. Il y a également peu d'articles ou d'études en français. Les expériences de perte et de séparation vécues par les enfants sans rapport avec la mort (par exemple, le décès d'un animal de compagnie, un divorce, un déménagement, etc.) sont abordés de façon exhaustive dans des livres, la presse populaire, et sur de nombreux sites web, mais moins abondamment dans la documentation.

L'analyse a mis l'accent sur la période 2000-2018, principalement pour refléter la « pensée actuelle », et se divise en plusieurs catégories :

L'apprentissage de la mort (p. 7)

Les expériences de perte et de séparation vécues par les enfants (p. 13)

Vivre avec une maladie grave ou mortelle (p. 14)

Le deuil (p. 17)

Le deuil selon les cultures (p. 27)

Le rendement scolaire (p. 28)

Problèmes précis (p. 29)

Résumés de conférences (p. 31)

La littérature grise (p. 33)<sup>1</sup>

Au cours de l'analyse documentaire, un certain nombre de ressources et de sources d'information potentielles ont été identifiées et sont énumérées en annexe (p. 35).

Le texte complet d'un article ou d'une étude n'est pas toujours disponible en ligne, auquel cas leur accès peut être assujéti à un droit ou un abonnement. Autrement, il est possible de communiquer avec l'auteur-ressource et de demander une copie de l'article ou de l'étude en question. Selon la nature de la demande, les auteurs pourront réagir de façon favorable à une demande d'analyse de leur étude en provenance du secteur à but non lucratif. Une demande pour une copie d'un article est une proposition assez simple. La permission de l'auteur serait nécessaire lorsqu'on a l'intention de faire circuler ou de distribuer – ou de reproduire en tout ou en partie – l'article en question.

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<sup>1</sup> Documentation et recherches produites par tous les organismes non compris dans les canaux de publication et de distribution commerciaux ou académiques traditionnels, par exemple, des organismes non-gouvernementaux.

*La compassion nous demande d'aller là où l'on a mal, d'entrer dans les lieux de souffrance, de partager la rupture, la peur, la confusion et l'angoisse. La compassion nous met au défi de hurler avec les miséreux, de gémir avec les solitaires, de pleurer avec les affligés. La compassion exige que nous soyons faibles avec les faibles, vulnérables avec les vulnérables, et impuissants avec les impuissants. La compassion signifie une immersion totale dans la condition humaine. Henri J.M. Nouwen (1932-1996)*

## Aperçu des résultats (translation of “Overview of Findings”)

Il n'est pas surprenant de constater qu'il existe un large consensus parmi les éducatrices et les éducateurs – et parmi d'autres membres du personnel scolaire, par exemple, les infirmières et infirmiers ainsi que les travailleuses et travailleurs sociaux – que les communautés scolaires doivent adopter une approche proactive afin d'appuyer plus efficacement les élèves passant par une expérience de perte et de séparation suite à la mort d'un membre de la famille, d'une ou d'un proche ou ami. Et, en même temps, que les communautés scolaires doivent travailler avec le personnel scolaire afin de développer les compétences et les ressources nécessaires pour mieux les équiper à fournir un soutien émotionnel et pratique. Il s'agit clairement d'une question de santé publique émergente.

Plusieurs études insistent sur l'importance d'entamer un vaste dialogue avec les élèves. Dans le cadre des programmes scolaires, les sciences sociales, par exemple, devraient comprendre des discussions sur le vieillissement, les soins aux aînées et aux aînés et de fin de vie – et, particulièrement, l'expérience de la mort et de la fin de vie. Cependant, les recherches et la preuve anecdotique indiquent un haut niveau de malaise quant aux discussions ouvertes de ces questions. Les adultes en général ont souvent beaucoup de difficulté quant à la façon d'engager un dialogue avec les enfants et les jeunes au sujet de la fin de vie, ce qui reflète la croyance traditionnelle qu'il faut protéger les enfants des réalités de la vie, ce qui pourrait avoir de sérieuses conséquences pour le bien-être présent et futur de jeunes esprits. Les enfants sont relativement libres des complexités qui se développent inévitablement parmi les rapports entre adultes au fil du temps ; leur expérience avec la personne décédée est souvent moins longue, moins compliquée – et comprend moins de « bagage émotionnel ».

Tout en exprimant leur empathie et leur engagement à servir les intérêts des élèves, les membres du personnel scolaire reconnaissent souvent se sentir mal préparés à répondre aux besoins affectifs non comblés des élèves en deuil. Il n'est pas rare de ne pas avoir une appréciation complète des enjeux du sentiment de perte et de séparation de l'élève, bien que la détérioration du rendement scolaire et le comportement en soient des signes révélateurs communs.

« L'apprentissage de la mort » et le soutien au deuil, en tant que partie intégrale du programme scolaire, font désormais l'objet d'une attention considérable, en partie en raison du nombre croissant de suicides étudiants et de la préoccupation du public à l'égard de la sécurité des élèves compte tenu de la violence accrue dans les écoles, dont les répercussions peuvent avoir un impact considérable sur le bien-être général et émotionnel de la population scolaire. Plusieurs études démontrent le besoin d'aussi tenir compte du bien-être émotionnel des enseignantes et des enseignants et des autres membres du personnel scolaire.

Le soutien aux élèves vivant avec une maladie grave ou mortelle, ainsi que ceux et celles atteints de déficience intellectuelle et développementale, reconnaît des besoins différents, de nombreuses recherches attestant l'importance décisive pour cette population étudiante de maintenir, par exemple, des amitiés, des réseaux sociaux, et le soutien des pairs. Les politiques scolaires vis-à-vis les ordonnances de ne pas réanimer ainsi que la très médiatisée aide médicale à mourir sont parmi les questions controversées.

La communication constitue peut-être l'obstacle le plus courant à surmonter. Plusieurs études décrivent des interventions et des stratégies potentielles pour aborder ce problème, tout en reconnaissant les possibilités de problèmes psychologiques et de comportement chez les jeunes qui vivent la mort d'un membre de la famille ou d'un proche. Un bon nombre de chercheurs insistent sur l'importance du soutien des pairs.

Une foule de renseignements et d'opinions est disponible, notamment sur l'internet, quant aux besoins non satisfaits des élèves confrontés à la perte et à la séparation. Par rapport à de nombreux pays, notamment la Scandinavie et le Royaume-Uni, au Canada l'ensemble de la communauté de recherche n'a que peu produit en matière de recherches fondées sur des données probantes. La recherche afin d'articuler de manière efficace les besoins des élèves de diverses origines culturelles et linguistiques demeure sérieusement sous-documenté.

*Jusqu'où vous allez dans la vie dépend de votre affection pour les jeunes, de votre compassion pour les personnes âgées, de votre sympathie pour l'effort et la tolérance envers les faibles et les forts. Parce qu'un jour dans votre vie, vous vous devrez passer par toutes ces étapes. **George Washington Carver (1864-1943)***

## Death Education

2018

### 1. Towards a Public Health Approach for Palliative Care: An Action-Research Study Focused on Engaging a Local Community and Educating Teenagers

*BMC PALLIATIVE CARE* | Published online – 29 June 2018 – The societal challenges of ageing populations have been recognized worldwide. Moreover, the relevance of community involvement and the active participation of citizens are seen as making a valuable contribution to the development of palliative care (PC). Nevertheless, although attention to PC is increasing, further developments and policy initiatives are needed to improve access to and quality of PC for all citizens who are in need of this type of care. The following policy implications can be drawn based on the authors findings. First, while their study highlights the positive impact of education initiatives about PC in early ages, further research is needed to assess the actual impact of education about PC in the acquisition of specific knowledge, development of competences and change of attitudes among teenagers and younger age groups (e.g., children). Second, education about palliative and end-of-life care should be promoted at local communities, for instance in primary and secondary schools, to foster community involvement, participation and empowerment. Finally, compassionate communities, described as networks that could encourage people to take some active responsibility for care and recognize that ageing and dying, death and bereavement are part of everyday life and happen to everyone, could and should be promoted to enhance the health and wellbeing of all citizens at the end of their life. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/2U5iHz>

2017

### 2. Transforming Students' Attitudes and Anxieties Toward Death and Loss: The Role of Prior Death Experiences

*OMEGA – JOURNAL OF DEATH & DYING* | Published online – 26 May 2017 – This study examines the impact of a death and dying course on 39 undergraduate students' attitudes and anxieties about death. Authors outline key aspects of the curriculum used in the course and discuss how the approach lends itself to a transformative learning experience related to death and loss, preparing students who will face clients with a variety of needs in these areas across practice settings. The majority of students experienced a decrease in death avoidance, fear of death, and overall death anxiety. Students with a history of multiple violent, traumatic, or unexpected deaths did not experience any significant changes but demonstrated increased scores of death anxiety suggesting that they may be in need of greater support while engaging in death education. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/QbBukd>

### 3. Making Death, Compassion and Partnership “Part of Life” in School Communities

*PASTORAL CARE IN EDUCATION*, 2017;35(2):111-123. Death can be considered a social taboo, a common source of fear and public avoidance. School communities are not immune to this, as the topic of death is constantly avoided. It is vital to understand how we can socially and culturally cultivate a positive regard for death, dying and bereavement in our school communities. Community members need to discuss these difficult issues and use strategies to enhance compassion, connectedness and support. In this literature review the authors reason that death is specifically not “part of life” in school communities. Due to the dearth of school community-based literature on this issue and the progressive literature residing in palliative care (PC), they aim to coalesce PC and school-based research, evaluate it and highlight compassion and partnership as a way forward for school communities. Essentially, societal attitudes about death and dying have been profoundly altered and our community ownership of these normal life events has largely disappeared. This is demonstrated for example, by PC moving from the social grass roots “modern hospice movement” formed in the 1960s and being reintegrated into the mainstream health care system by the end of the 1990s,

resulting in an overall medicalised morphing of death, dying and bereavement issues. Therefore, the authors recommend that further research be conducted in how to develop compassionate schools to inform us how death may be continually made “part of life” in school communities, for the benefit of students, teachers and families alike. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/V4H7NR>

2016

#### 4. Integrating Palliative Care into the Community: The Role of Hospices and Schools

*BMJ SUPPORTIVE & PALLIATIVE CARE* | Published online – 11 August 2016 – Palliative care (PC) services have, up to now, paid insufficient attention to social aspects of dying and bereavement and this has affected how patients and their families experience end of life (EoL) and bereavement within their communities. New public health approaches to PC offer a different way forward by seeking to develop communities that support death and bereavement. Such approaches are now a priority for the majority of hospices in the U.K. and work with schools has been identified as a key area of work. Practice that engages schools and children on issues concerning EoL care is, however, underdeveloped and under-documented. This research explored the role of hospices in working with schools to promote education and support around EoL and bereavement experiences. Seven innovations were identified that were found to be useful for the school curriculum and the relationship between hospices, school communities and wider society. A model for integrated practice between hospices and schools is suggested. This research adds to knowledge about how hospices might engage in community engagement activities that encourage school staff to develop greater openness and support around EoL and bereavement care for their children. This will require a rethinking of normal hospice services to also participate in community capacity building. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/75pbZZ>

#### 5. Integrating Pediatric Palliative Care into the School and Community

*PEDIATRIC CLINICS OF NORTH AMERICA*, 2016;63(5):899-911. The needs of children with complex chronic conditions exist both in a health care context and in the community where children interact with peers, including school, places of worship, sports, activities and organizations. Partnerships between pediatric palliative care professionals and teachers, coaches, spiritual leaders, activity directors, and others, may lead to greater health and well-being. Children near the end of life or those with out-of-hospital do-not-resuscitate orders may also find palliation in their community. **First page view (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/3kuQBK>

2015

#### 6. Death and its Didactics in Pre-School and Primary School

*PROCEDIA – SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES*, 2015;1855:91-97. If death is an issue inherent to life, why is it still out of education systems? Death – and its didactics – is an ignored area, pushed into the background or covered up by society, including school. With few exceptions, teachers are not sure if they should do something about it at schools. And if so, it is necessary for them knowing what to do and how to proceed. The former was demonstrated by the data collected in the Teacher Training School from the University of the Basque Country (Spain). Students of that university (people studying to be teachers at the pre-school and primary school levels) were asked about different aspects related to the didactics of death, as well as their own attitudes towards the topic. Results point out the need of training students for the aforementioned subject. These students, who will be teachers of children between 0 and 12 years within 3-4 years, are totally lost in relation to the topic of death, both in general terms (how to talk about it with the kids) and in response to specific events (disasters, death of a relative, death of a child in the class). Therefore, it seems clear that two changes are necessary in relation to this topic. Firstly, a better formation or training for students who are going to be these childrens teachers is necessary. And, secondly, it is also



necessary the creation and implementation of educational resources to tackle this issue from both aforementioned points of view (preventive and reactive). **Abstract (inc. list of references):** <https://goo.gl/3DYNFw>

2013

## 7. Teachers' Attitudes and Experiences Regarding Death Education in the Classroom

*ALBERTA JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH*, 2013;59(1):126-128. Overall, the teachers in this study reported feelings of uncertainty in discussing death with students. They indicated that the topic is important but expressed a lack of confidence in initiating or participating in such discussions. The need for further training and guidance on the topic was identified by most teachers as the main reason for these feelings. These results suggest a need and desire for teacher support in providing death education to students. Such support may promote further death education in schools and help children be better prepared to deal with death in the future.

**N.B.** Journal contents page (Scroll down to 'Research Notes' and click on pdf icon to access full text): <https://goo.gl/Nnr6uL>

## 8. An Approach to Educating Children About Death

*EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF PALLIATIVE CARE*, 2013;20(2):82084. Talking about death and bereavement with children before they have to experience them should be a key part of education. Children who reflect on death are likely to attach greater value to life, having a higher appreciation of their own and that of others. In 2004, a series of group sessions with ten-year-olds took place at a primary school in Paris, during which the children were invited to openly express their thoughts and feelings about death. The group sessions proved to have a positive effect, both in the short and long term, as illustrated by the case of one child who had to cope with two bereavements in her teenage years.

**N.B.** This journal has ceased publication. The author discusses the background to her article (presented in French and English) on the European Association for Palliative Care website at: <https://goo.gl/3ZvN48>

2011

## 9. Death and Dying in the Curriculum of Public Schools: Is There a Place?

*JOURNAL OF EMERGING KNOWLEDGE ON EMERGING MARKETS*, 2011;3(11):511-520. Discussing death and dying can provide both students and teachers an outlet for mending the torn fabric for those who grieve and those who comfort them when someone dies. Death is the surest event of our lives from the moment we take our first breaths into this world. When we talk about our lives we use a lot of "maybe," "if" and "perhaps." Maybe we will go to school; maybe we will grow up, go to college and maybe even get married; maybe we will have children. The "maybes" and "perhaps" of life are endless. There is, however, no maybe about our death and dying. We say, "when we die." We should therefore embrace our death and our dying. Death can be a beautiful and a less painful experience if we come to befriend it as we do our living. According to de Hennezel (1997), "death can cause a human to become what he or she was called to become. It can be in the fullest sense of the word, an accomplishment." Death puts life and living into focus. "There is life amid death, life in death, life from death" (Pinar). Death and dying is a mystery that man will never be solved or uncovered. Does not nature itself teach this? Animals and plants die and scientist have not been able to bring them back to life. It is inevitable and our students need to be taught and to know about it. Schools should be the place where they learn about death and dying as part of the curriculum. The content of the death and dying education programs can range from discussion of a pet in kindergarten classroom to the study of human death, burial and bereavement as the children get older. The

sooner we learn to accept this the better we will live with each other each day as we will acknowledge that we live in the shadow of our dying. We will begin to treat everyone we come in contact with differently. We will live each day as if it is the last day of our lives; not as sad people but with a love, respect and an appreciation for life. The moments we spend on this earth are precious and we “should make the time we share together precious, worthy of caring, worthy of presence” (Pinar 1992).

**N.B.** Journal contents page (Scroll down to ‘Death and Dying in the Curriculum...’ and click on pdf icon to access full text): <https://goo.gl/vqo5if>

2010

### 10. Death Education: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perspectives of Irish Parents and Teachers

*DEATH STUDIES*, 2010;34(5):325-333. This article reports on a cross-sectional survey of the knowledge, attitudes and perspectives of Irish parents and school teachers concerning children’s grief and the concept of death education. The sample comprised 119 parents and 142 teachers of Irish Primary-school children (5-12 years of age) who completed a self administered questionnaire. Both parents and teachers reported high levels of understanding of the nature of children’s grief and strongly supported the view that death should be discussed with children before they encounter it. Although discussions of death were reported in the classroom and in the home, both teachers and parents, particularly men, reported being uncomfortable talking to children about death. There was general support for the inclusion of death education in the school curriculum, with both teachers and parents supporting the need for further teacher training to undertake its delivery. There were few significant differences between the expressed attitudes of parents and teachers. However, teachers were more likely than parents to agree that death education would take away from parental responsibility. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/TuLECi>

### 11. Teaching Death Studies: Reflections From the Classroom

*ENHANCING LEARNING IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES*, 2010;2(3):1-11. Researching individuals’ experiences of death and funerals is a sensitive issue, and it is also the case that teaching death studies can be sensitive. This paper draws on experience gained during teaching on a module concerned with rituals of death to explore the issue of sensitivity in the classroom. Emotional expression is not encouraged in the classroom situation; techniques are suggested to reduce the likelihood of students being emotionally overcome. Given that it is not always possible to prevent this happening, ways of handling this situation are also addressed. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/3ep7ZN>

### 12. La mort à l’école : les besoins des enseignants

*REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE SOINS PALLIATIFS*, 2008/3 (Vol. 23). Depuis 16 ans, j’interviens dans les écoles pour parler en amont d’une mort ou d’un deuil. Aujourd’hui, je travaille en tant que chercheuse au sein de l’O.R.M.E. (Organisme de Recherche sur la Mort et l’Enfant) dans le but de montrer que l’on peut réintégrer la mort dans notre société en en parlant avec les enfants afin qu’ils puissent vivre plus sereinement les moments plus ou moins difficiles de leur vie présente et future. Mon objectif est ensuite de convaincre les autorités officielles en matière d’éducation, de recherche et de santé pour insérer le thème de la mort dans le programme scolaire des enfants et dans le programme des Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres. En réponse à la demande d’enseignants confrontés aux questionnements des enfants sur la mort auxquels ils ne savent pas toujours répondre mais qu’ils souhaitent ne pas laisser en suspens, j’interviens lors de plusieurs séances au sein d’une classe pour donner la possibilité à chacun de s’exprimer sur la mort et former l’enseignant lui-même à ne plus l’évincer pour les besoins de l’enfant. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/n5RvoN>

**N.B.** Also in this issue of *Revue internationale de soins palliatifs*, the author discusses ‘S’éduquer à la mort en milieu scolaire.’ <https://goo.gl/v4RjGb>

2007

13. Arousing Empathy and Promoting Prosocial Behavior Toward Bereaved Peers: Using Guided Fantasy with Elementary School Children

*DEATH STUDIES* | Published online – 14 August 2007 – The content, structure, and outcome of two classroom presentations devised for fourth- and fifth-grade children are discussed. The focus of the presentations was to convey understanding of the feelings associated with an irrevocable loss, especially a death; to consider what support a classmate might need when experiencing the loss of a brother or sister; and to practice expressing such support by means of writing a letter to a classmate whose sibling has died. At each session the children filled out a questionnaire about feelings associated with the death of a sibling. Answers on the second questionnaire indicated appreciation for the enduring aspect of grief reactions. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/rhBgki>

2003

14. School Violence: A Stimulus for Death Education – A Critical Analysis

*JOURNAL OF LOSS & TRAUMA*, 2003;8(1):35-40. The exploration of death through formal education is a "road less traveled." In fact, a death education curriculum and pedagogy appear oxymoronic. Ideologies, religion, and morals aside, death is, and will always be, an indisputable reality. Within the last decade, mass school shootings have embellished the relationship between school and violent behavior. In response, schools have embraced secondary and tertiary prevention models, neither of which has been empirically supported. Perhaps the tragedy of September 11 is a wake-up call for us to reflect on the uncertainties of life and the finality of death. The purpose of this article is to explore the theoretical presupposition that a death education curriculum moderates school violence. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/gtuf9r>

2000

15. Is There a Place for Death Education in the Primary Curriculum?

*PASTORAL CARE IN EDUCATION*, 2000;18(1):22-26. Teachers have always had to deal with pupils experiencing bereavement and loss. Recent tragedies such as the shootings at Dunblane have highlighted the need for "death education" to be considered in schools, although previous research has revealed that issues of confidence and effectiveness are the main barriers to the adoption of death education. However, it appears that pupils' opinions on this issue, including their views on the inclusion of death education into their curriculum, have generally not been sought. This paper describes some small-scale research, which sought to determine pupils' views on this subject, as well as those of the professionals who teach them. The study revealed some significant differences of opinion between pupils and their teachers. The conclusion highlights important implications for professionals involved in caring for children. **Abstract (w. link to literature cited):** <https://goo.gl/hDQAtt>

16. Evaluating Teacher Support Teams in Secondary Schools: Supporting Teachers for Special Education Needs and Other Needs

*RESEARCH PAPERS IN EDUCATION*, 2000;15(3):307-324. Teacher Support Teams (TSTs) are a way of supporting individual teachers who request support over a teaching concern relating broadly to special educational needs. This paper reports on the development of these teams and the evaluation of their workings and impact in four secondary schools. The training and setting up process were monitored over four terms and the impact assessed at the end of this period using a case study evaluation strategy. This paper

provides details from two schools, one that managed to build the TST into the school system, and another that had difficulties in doing so. It then summarizes several key general lessons that emerge from the four schools. The paper concludes with a discussion of the policy context of this teacher support initiative and its relationship to staff development and support as a school priority. The project is also evaluated in the context of findings from a national survey of special education needs teacher support. Recommendations are then made for governors and senior managers about implementing support systems in the current school system. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/6cF29X>

## Children's Experiences of Loss & Separation

2017

### 17. "Everything has to die one day": Children's Explorations of the Meanings of Death in Human-Animal-Nature Relationships

*ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESEARCH*, 2017;23(1):75-90. Children's experiences of death are a potentially vital component of their developing sense of relatedness to non-human others and nature. Environmental education theory and practice would benefit from a broader understanding of how children view death and loss within ecological systems as well as within human-animal-nature relationships, but such research is currently lacking. This paper focuses on children's own descriptions of the deaths of companion animals and explores three emergent, ecological themes. These themes indicate that death experiences within the home space are significant in ecological learning. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/GuxZ5b>

2010

### 18. Gone But Not Forgotten: Children's Experiences with Attachment, Separation and Loss

*eJOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE NETWORK* | Published online – July 2010 – Attachment, separation, and loss are critical life events for many young children. This article discusses prevalent factors of separation and loss and their potential harmful effects on development. Also, books and resources geared for children are suggested to help early childhood professionals facilitate resolution with affected children and their families. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/1b5fbg>

## Living With Life-Limiting/Threatening Illness

2018

### 19. Contrasting Disclosure Practices and Experiences of School Support for Australian Adolescents with Cancer, Cystic Fibrosis and Anorexia Nervosa: Parent Perspectives

*INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION*, 2018;22(2):176-191. Schools in Australia are required to promote equitable access to education and provide support services to students with chronic health conditions (CHCs). This qualitative study was conducted to explore stakeholders' experiences and perceptions regarding school-based support. In-depth interviews were conducted with 38 parents of upper secondary school students with cystic fibrosis, anorexia nervosa or cancer (which were illustrative of different types of severe congenital, mental health or somatic CHCs). This enabled comparison of findings to determine whether there were any patterns in perceptions and experiences that were tied to the different CHCs. Data were analysed using a modified grounded theory approach to identify themes. Even though analysis indicated that all cohorts of parents viewed informed educators as best placed to provide tailored school-based support, major cohort differences were reported in parental experiences of school-based support as well as parental diagnosis disclosure behaviour. This latter finding was associated with cohort-related perceptions of risk to their adolescent child. Barriers to school-based support were perceived as varying by condition, the advocacy experience of parents and the nature of health service supports. Taking these findings into account, modification of current policies and practices within education and health sectors may lead to more equitable educational outcomes. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/gRhYf8>

### 20. Teachers Communicating About Life-Limiting Conditions, Death and Bereavement

*PASTORAL CARE IN EDUCATION*, 2018;36(1):57-69. The number of children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions in England is double what it was at the millennium. These conditions include cystic fibrosis, cancer, organ failure and severe neurological injuries. The Teaching for Life project aimed to explore the needs of teachers working in English schools in relation to working with children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. Ninety teachers completed a questionnaire and 38 completed individual and group interviews. About half the teachers interviewed had experience of working with children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions, and half did not. The teachers expressed a number of anxieties about coping with illness, death and bereavement. They described difficulties in communicating with parents, children and health professionals. They worried about maintaining their professional role whilst needing to contain their own emotions and the emotions of others, within school cultures that did not feel supportive. The paper concludes that policies and practices that seek to support children with medical conditions need to acknowledge the weight of responsibility for teachers. They need to articulate with a whole school approach that protects and promotes teachers' emotional well-being. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/fBGvum>

2015

### 21. Students, Severe Illness, and Palliative Care: Results From a Pilot Study on a School-Based Intervention

*AMERICAN JOURNAL OF HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE MEDICINE*, 2015;32(7):715-724. This study was aimed at piloting a school-based intervention on severe illness, within a project focused on spreading knowledge of palliative care (PC) among high school students (phases 0-2 Medical Research Council

Framework). The intervention entailed the screening of a topic-related movie, two classroom meetings, and the development of a class-based multimedia production. Five classes from five high schools participated in this study, and a before-after evaluation was used to assess intervention feasibility and impact. Valid questionnaires were filled in by 84% (before) and 79% (after) of the 89 students. Concerning students' knowledge on PC, the after evaluation showed a significantly higher paired proportions of students reporting on "improving patient quality of life" and "life-threatening illness." Intervention components were deemed helpful by students, and positive feedback on the experience was given. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/MEvYVm>

2014

## 22. Supporting Children with Life-Threatening Conditions in the Schools

*JOURNAL OF HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE NURSING*, 2014;16(6):355-361. School nurses are a source of support for teachers who have students with life-threatening conditions, and they provide support to school staff, families, and children. However, little is known regarding the questions they encounter and their desired sources of support, including interest in receiving support from hospice personnel. A national questionnaire was distributed with 303 school nurse respondents, of which 40.9% had students receiving hospice services. School nurses encountered several types of questions from children with life-threatening conditions, their classmates and families, and school staff. School nurses also had questions themselves, in such areas as gaining and disseminating information, promoting understanding of the child's condition and providing support, addressing symptoms in conjunction with school activities, and do-not-resuscitate orders in the school setting. Results indicated that school nurses would like more information about hospice and would like hospice personnel to provide information and support. Considerations for hospice staff are discussed. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/7i9CsB>

2009

## 23. L'école, une spécificité des soins palliatifs pédiatriques : Réalité et vicissitudes

*MÉDECINE PALLIATIVE*, 2009;8(2):96-98. À partir d'un cas clinique, les auteurs présentent une exigence typiquement pédiatrique – celle de l'école – alors que l'enfant requiert des soins palliatifs pour plusieurs années. La maladie dont elle est atteinte – une épidermolyse bulleuse – met en conflit deux valeurs, celles des soins et celle de la scolarisation, sans qu'aucune structure adaptée ne soit trouvée de façon satisfaisante. Les exigences légales de scolarisation des enfants porteurs de maladies graves et chroniques sont difficiles à satisfaire en l'état et demandent une analyse au cas par cas, avec beaucoup de bonne volonté pour lutter contre les préjugés. **Résumé:** <https://goo.gl/fpQRrN>

School, a specificity of palliative paediatric care: Realness and vicissitudes

From a clinical case, the authors report a typical paediatric requirement – schooling – although the child requires palliative care for several years. The disease she is suffering from – dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa – put into conflict two values, care and school, without any satisfactory setting found whatsoever. Legal requirements for schooling of children having severe and chronic diseases are difficult to satisfy nowadays and require a case-to-case analysis, with a lot of goodwill to struggle against bias.

2004

24. Positive Interventions for Children with Chronic Illness:  
Parents' and Teachers' Concerns and Recommendations

*AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*, 2004;48(3):239-252. Schools today are faced with increasing numbers of students with chronic illness. Medical advances, which improve health and prolong life, and increased incidence levels among some illnesses have led to this increase. Children with a chronic illness are more likely to encounter academic, social and emotional difficulties. The challenge facing educators and families is to ensure that these children receive and maintain a quality education. Understanding the complex issues surrounding the delivery of educational services for this body of students enables more insightful programming and planning to ensure that these students have equal access to the same educational outcomes as other students. Five hundred (25%) Department of Education & Training schools across New South Wales were randomly selected to participate in a study examining parents' and teachers' perceptions of educational services for students with chronic illness: 232 teachers and parents responded with completed surveys. This paper examines both concerns and recommendations, and considers how these issues can be tackled. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/nTQ6k4>



## Grief & Bereavement

2018

### 25. The role of school psychologists in the support of grieving children

*SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY QUARTERLY*, 2018;33(3):361-362. School psychologists are in a unique position to both identify and work with grieving students to provide guidance to schools, families, and peers on approaches to support such children and youth; and to offer training to classroom educators so that they are better prepared to support grieving students. Yet, there has been minimal research published on this topic in professional journals. This special section of *School Psychology Quarterly* is devoted to grief and loss with the hope of beginning to narrow this gap in the literature. The three articles in this special section add to an evolving evidence-base that grief in children is common and the impact can be profound, that school professionals can and should play a major role in supporting grieving children, and that school psychologists can play a key role in empowering classroom educators and other school professionals so that no child in the future has to grieve alone. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/Atz8g6>

**N.B.** Journal contents page (Scroll down to 'Special Section: Grief and Loss in Children & Adolescents'):  
<https://goo.gl/hbT689>

### 26. Interventions for Young Bereaved Children: A Systematic Review and Implications for School Mental Health Providers

*CHILD & YOUTH CARE FORUM*, 2018;47(2):151-171. Many young children experience the death of a family member and they may be at risk for developing psychological and behavioral problems, but not much is known about how to help young children cope with such a stressful and painful experience. The purposes of this study are to identify the interventions for bereaved young children and examine the effectiveness of the interventions. A systematic review of the literature was performed to investigate the effects of interventions for preschool-age children (3-5 years) who experience the death of a family member. Seventeen studies that met the inclusion criteria for the purpose of this review were identified. All of the studies involved a small sample, and majority of the studies mixed preschool children with other older children in the sample. Play-based therapies were the most common interventions for grieving young children. Involving parents in the interventions, regardless of their therapeutic orientation, was a critical ingredient. Limited empirical evidence of positive intervention outcomes for preschool-age bereaved children was available. Surviving parents were seen as an important agent to help young children grieve and cope with the experience of loss. Implications for school mental health practice and research are provided. **Abstract (w. list of references):** <https://goo.gl/L9ri1f>

### 27. Peer Support for Bereaved Children: Setting Eyes on Children's Views Through an Educational Action Research Project

*DEATH STUDIES*, 2018;42(7):446-455. This article investigates children's views on providing peer support to bereaved children. The data (pre- and post-interviews and written documents) come from an action research study of a teacher-researcher and her 16 children aged 10-11 years old. Analysis of the data shows children's ideas on supporting a bereaved child and how this support should be provided, taking into consideration various factors such as the relationship with the bereaved and the role of memories. The paper emphasizes that children should have structured opportunities across the whole-school curriculum to learn how loss affects people's lives to support themselves and others. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/qm5Y4g>

## 28. Voices That Want to be Heard: Using Bereaved Danish Students Suggestions to Update School Bereavement Response Plans

*DEATH STUDIES*, 2018;42(4):254-267. This study explored how Danish students experienced returning to school following parental bereavement. Eighteen focus group interviews were conducted with 39 participants aged 9 to 17. All participants had experienced the loss of a primary caregiver. Data collection was divided into two phases. In Phase I, 22 participants from four grief groups were interviewed 4 times over the course of a year. During Phase II, confirmatory focus groups were undertaken with the 17 participants. This article explores the findings related to ideas and suggestions made by the students about how the Danish school response could be improved to better meet their needs. The presentation of data is divided into seven themes, which are: 1) Desired school response; 2) Desired support from teachers; 3) Desired boundaries between students and teachers; 4) Desired collaboration; 5) Desired support from peers; 6) Desired rules and structure; and, 7) Desires related to gifts and rituals. Study findings indicate that most students want to be included and have a say when the school plans how to respond to their loss. Students further highlight a need for teacher support when having to reconnect with the class; a need for set rules in relation to leaving the class when feeling sad, and; a need for schools to see the loss as a life-changing event, and grief as something that does not simply disappear after a few months. The article concludes by discussing the ways in which the recommendations provided by the participants can be incorporated into a modern revision of Danish school bereavement response plans. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/xigye7>

## 29. Teacher Perspectives on Grief Among Children with Intellectual Disabilities

*JOURNAL OF LOSS & TRAUMA*, 2018;23(2):159-175. The death of a parent can have a profound impact on a child. However, little is known about how children with intellectual disabilities demonstrate grief or how teachers respond to student grief. Constructivist grounded theory methods were used to analyze data collected from five special education teachers of elementary students with intellectual disabilities. Categories related to grieving, loss, support, coping, and emotion were found. Teachers reported a range of grieving behaviors displayed by children with intellectual disabilities in the classroom and used various strategies to provide support. Grief in surviving caregivers and assistance from other school personnel were also described. The need for additional training of teachers and counselors about grief in children with intellectual disabilities is highlighted. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/zcgKnj>

## 30. The Danish Bereavement Response in 2015: Historic Development & Evaluation of Success

*SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH*, 2018;62(1):140-149. In the 1980s, Norwegian researchers pioneered efforts towards developing school support for bereaved children. Eighteen years later, a Danish approach was created based on these foundations. This article explores the Danish school bereavement response plans (b-plans) and investigates their ability to support both teachers and bereaved children. Today, the system has one of the highest implementation rates in the world and the majority of teachers feel equipped to deal with bereavement in school. Nevertheless, adopting a standardised approach potentially leads to the neglect of individual needs. Moreover, concerns exist over whether existing b-plans are current. This article concludes that b-plans have succeeded in becoming the primary tool used by teachers, a feat that systems in other countries often fail to achieve. However, the system seldom includes the perspectives of the students it was designed to help. This is the challenge that the next generation of b-plans must remedy. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/sUYRs9>

2017

### 31. One Teacher's Experiences: Responding to Death Through Language

*ENGLISH JOURNAL*, 2017;107(2):41-46. A survey by the American Federation of Teachers and New York Life Foundation found that “nearly 7 in 10 teachers reported having at least one grieving student currently in their classrooms.”<sup>1</sup> However, 93% of classroom teachers said they have “never received bereavement training,” only 1% received training as part of their coursework in college, and just 3% said their school or district offers it. That’s significant, since another study found that one in 20 children will lose a parent by age 16, and a majority of children will experience a significant loss before they complete high school. These statistics support the idea that it’s our responsibility as teachers to prepare ourselves to deal with death in the classroom. If you teach long enough, you’ll likely have many experiences with death. Do an Internet search for anything similar to “death in the classroom” and you’ll find resources for helping students deal with the death of everyone from a pet to a parent. The challenge is how to apply all of the advice to meet students’ needs in specific circumstances. As important, I believe that English teachers have the unique opportunity to respond appropriately because of our understanding of context and our grounding in writing, reading, speaking, and communication.



1. 'Supporting the grieving student,' American Federation of Teachers.  
<https://www.aft.org/childrens-health/mental-health/supporting-grieving-student>

**N.B.** The focus of the November 2017 issue of the *English Journal* is death in the English classroom. Access the full text of each article by click on the title. Contents page: <https://goo.gl/jwwm1t>

### 32. “Mourning with the morning bell”: An Examination of Secondary Educators’ Attitudes and Experiences in Managing the Discourse of Death in the Classroom

*OMEGA – JOURNAL OF DEATH & DYING* | Published Online – 24 October 2017 –A plethora of research exists about death and dying, particularly with regard to the prescriptive strategy on how teachers should address death in their classrooms. However, there is a gap in the literature about teachers’ perceived preparedness to discuss a student’s death in their classrooms. The following qualitative study used focus groups to explore teachers’ experiences with and beliefs about death, dying, coping, student death, and preparedness to address student death in the classroom. Data were transcribed and thematically analyzed. Themes and subthemes for all research questions are presented and explained; some themes explored include teachers’ views of death, death versus dying, initial and long-term coping, difficulties in addressing student death, the teachers’ role after a student’s death, feelings of being prepared versus unprepared to address student death in the classroom. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/jza2SZ>

### 33. The Success of a Planned Bereavement Response: A Survey on Teacher Use of Bereavement Response Plans When Supporting Grieving Children in Danish Schools

*PASTORAL CARE IN EDUCATION*, 2017;35(1):28-38. This article investigates the strengths and weaknesses of the Danish Bereavement response plans. These are used by teachers to support grieving students and have been implemented in 96% of all Danish schools. The study is based on an Internet survey conducted with 967 teachers. Issues investigated are: “generalisation of grief,” “forgetting long-term grief,” “teacher distress” and “renewal of plans.” Participating teachers believe that the current system works well and that the bereavement response plans have made them feel more confident when confronted with loss. However, this comes at a potential cost of generalising children’s experiences of grief, so that they fit into the school support system. While the response plans are effective at ensuring initial support for bereaved children, their influence seems to diminish with time. The study found that many plans were around a decade old and that this could mean some had been forgotten or become outdated. The article concludes that while teachers find the current response plans effective, the bereavement response system could benefit from being updated. Such an update needs to focus on dealing with the issues highlighted in this article.

Future response plans should also have greater emphasis on the needs voiced by bereaved students who have experienced the system. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/3faamx>

2016

#### 34. Voices We Forget – Danish Students Experience of Returning to School Following Parental Bereavement

*OMEGA – JOURNAL OF DEATH AND DYING* | Published online – 21 November 2016 – This study explores how Danish students experience returning to school following parental bereavement. Eighteen focus group interviews with 39 participants aged 9 to 17 years were conducted. All participants had experienced the loss of a primary caregiver. Data collection was divided into two phases. In Phase I, 22 participants from four grief groups were interviewed 4 times over the course of a year. During Phase II, confirmatory focus groups were undertaken with the 17 participants. This article explores findings related to the four themes of initial school response, long-term support, challenges within the class, and academic challenges. The study found that (a) students struggle to reconnect with classmates following the return to school and often feel alone, (b) schools fail to have guidelines in place for what they are allowed to do if becoming sad the class, and (c) schools seem to forget their loss as time passes. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/jp7YX3>

#### 35. Dealing with the Concepts of “Grief” and “Grieving” in the Classroom: Children’s Perceptions, Emotions, and Behavior

*OMEGA – JOURNAL OF DEATH & DYING*, 2016;77(3):240-266. This article presents an action research study that explores how a fifth-grade classroom of 10- to 11-year-old children in Cyprus perceive the concepts of grief and grieving, after an educational intervention provided space for discussing such issues. It also explores the impact that the intervention program had on children’s emotions while exploring these concepts and illustrates how it affected their behavior. The findings suggest that the intervention had a constructive impact on children’s understandings of grief and grieving along two important dimensions. First, the intervention helped children better define emotional responses to loss (grief). Second, children seemed to overcome their anxiety while talking about grief and grieving and were able to share relevant personal experiences. The study has important implications for curriculum development, pedagogical practice, and teacher training on death education. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/yKvZNT>

2015

#### 36. Suggestions for the Ideal Follow-up for Bereaved Students as Seen by School Personnel

*EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES*, 2015;20(3):289-301. Although the school personnel [i.e., study participants] obviously have high levels of empathy and commitment towards grieving students, they expressed limited knowledge about how child bereavement affects school performance, concentration, and learning, and how this restricted their own efforts to arrange for grieving children during the school day. They also signalled tensions created by the need to mediate too many tasks in the teacher’s role, school staff’s lack of grief knowledge, and guilt for not doing more for bereaved children at school. Despite the existence of solid theoretical and research base in the field of grief in children, opportunities for provision of evidence-validated intervention by teachers and other school personnel in response to grief, and prompt referral of bereaved children suffering more complex grief reactions, appear to be severely compromised. The school personnel pointed out the necessities for action plans and written routines, resources and clarifications of roles, and some basic help principles, key help measures, and improvements to improve the support for bereaved schoolchildren. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/Jk47KX>

### 37. North Yorkshire Schools' Responses to Pupil Bereavement

*PASTORAL CARE IN EDUCATION*, 2015;33(2):116-128. This was a research project carried out in North Yorkshire schools by the loss and bereavement research group of the Educational Psychology Service. The background was an interest in how schools responded to bereaved pupils, whether they had a structured response, trained staff and training needs, from where they sought support and the level of priority given to the area. All three hundred and fifty-three of the county's primary, secondary and special schools were surveyed by electronic questionnaire and seventy-two, 20%, responded. Parental bereavement was rated relatively highly, although most schools sought outside help after a parental death, a need for training was expressed and there were no consistent support or referral pathways. Schools tended to have an ad hoc response, few had policies, procedures or governors actively involved in the area. Loss was addressed in the curriculum by a third of schools, and a similar number had received training. Schools did not always have a clear understanding of the implications of pupil loss generally with a narrow view of loss. Recommendations included an increase in training, taking a wider view of loss and having clear referral pathways. Ideas for further areas of research included looking in more detail at schools systems in the area of loss and bereavement. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/jrZuLB>

2014

### 38. The Ligurian High-School Educational Project on Palliative Care: Development and Piloting of a School-Based Intervention on Bereavement and Severe Illness

*AMERICAN JOURNAL OF HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE MEDICINE*, 2014;31(7):756-764. This study was aimed at developing and piloting a school-based intervention on severe illness-induced bereavement through a project focused on spreading knowledge of palliative care among high school students (phases 0-II Medical Research Council Framework). The intervention entailed the screening of a topic-related movie and a classroom meeting. Eight classes from 2 high schools participated, and a before-after evaluation was used to assess intervention feasibility and impact. Valid questionnaires, including 2 open-ended questions focusing on bereavement and strategies for coping with loss, were filled in by 89% (before) and 84% (after) of the 159 students. In the after evaluation, content analysis on the "strategies" question showed that answers concerning closeness and sharing were reported more frequently. Positive feedback was collected as regards the overall experience. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/HHj4eY>

### 39. School Social Work with Grieving Children

*CHILDREN & SCHOOLS*, 2014;36(2):93-103. The purpose of the research reported in this article was to advance understanding of the work of school social workers with grieving students. This research was aimed at answering the following question: What are school social workers' experiences working with grieving children? There were two steps in this study. Fifty-nine school social workers in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, agreed to participate in the preliminary e-mail survey. Of these participants, 22 school social workers were interviewed in person for approximately 45 to 60 minutes. This exploratory study required an open-ended, inductive approach using qualitative methods. Interviews were transcribed and coded. Major codes were developed using the guided interview questions. Constant comparison was also used. The data analysis identified four main themes in the responses: 1) Barriers to helping grieving students; 2) Variations on how grief is defined; 3) Social workers' preparation for dealing with grief and loss issues; and, 4) Referrals of grieving students to outside resources. Sub-themes were developed under each theme. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/GJreyy>

### 40. Children and Young People with Refugee Backgrounds: Their Experiences of Change, Loss and Grief and the Seasons for Growth Program

*GRIEF MATTERS*, 2014;17(3):80-84. The change, loss and grief experiences of children and young people with refugee backgrounds is explored through a consideration of their resilience and also the challenges

they have faced during their life in their home country, exile and resettlement, and the normal day-to-day experiences of people living in Australia. The role of school in the lives of children and young people with refugee experience is discussed, and the use of a small group grief and loss education program, Seasons for Growth, to support these children and young people in strengthening their social and emotional wellbeing, is described. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/V6MNxe>

#### 41. Grieving Students: The Response and Support of Educators in Irish Schools

*JOURNAL OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH*,2014;XIII. It is estimated that bereavement has affected between 36,000 and 60,000 young people in Ireland. Little academic research has been conducted to ascertain the response of Irish schools to bereavement and grief support. The research outlined in this paper documents the approach and response of Irish primary and post-primary schools regarding policy and provision of support to students who have experienced bereavement as well as providing preliminary analyses of exploratory interviews with key stakeholders. The Bereavement Audit Survey was administered to a representative sample of primary and post-primary schools throughout the Republic of Ireland. The results demonstrate that in the absence of clear advice and support, Irish schools are being proactive and supportive of the students in their care, however, they also indicate the desire for further support in terms of policy, curricula materials, practice direction, staff support, and a Continual Professional Development programme. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/BJkhp7>

2013

#### 42. Teacher' Perceptions of Their Role Facing Children in Grief

*EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES*, 2013;18(2):125-134. A questionnaire was sent to teachers in the western part of Norway to survey the attitudes and thoughts teachers have about grief in young people and how they look upon their supportive role. In addition, six focus group interviews were conducted to get in-depth knowledge from the same population of teachers and headmasters. Participants in both groups had extensive experience from working in schools. Results showed that Norwegian teachers were well aware of children's needs and were understanding of their situation. They did not perceive grief to be something that children easily forget and they were aware of how important it is to show empathy for their grieving students. Most agreed that grieving students were overlooked in school. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/39HkUn>

#### 43. Enfants endeuillés : expérience des ateliers médiatisés « Histoire d'en parler »

*MÉDECINE PALLIATIVE*, 2013;12(3):152-156. Accompagner les enfants en deuil avec l'aide de dispositifs appropriés apparaît plus qu'une nécessité au regard de toutes les données de la littérature et de notre expérience clinique auprès des enfants endeuillés. Nous décrivons le dispositif des ateliers « Histoire d'en Parler » mis en place sur la région Midi-Pyrénées et au travers de notre expérience clinique, nous essaierons de dégager les points forts de cette clinique du deuil et d'en tirer les perspectives pour l'accompagnement et le suivi de ces enfants. Le deuil n'est pas une maladie. Les données bibliographiques et notre expérience clinique auprès des enfants endeuillés, nous montrent que quel que soit le type de deuil (parents, fratrie), ces enfants ont besoin d'être soutenus. Certains dispositifs mis en place et notamment le travail de groupe, se sont révélés opérants mais il reste à en affiner les modalités et à en réaliser l'évaluation. **Résumé:** <https://goo.gl/UwnRRp>

Cont.

Bereaved children: Experience of peer support group "Let's talk about it"

Helping children cope with separation and loss seems mandatory according to what literature shows us and to our clinical experience with bereaved children. We will describe the bereavement support groups program we have settled in Midi-Pyrénées area (France) for children and we will discuss the end point of the clinical aspects of this mourning. Perspectives for the future to support those children will be given. Bereavement is

not a disease. Literature and our clinical experience with mourning child allow us to consider that bereavement need to be accompanying and supporting approach. Some measures declined in practice and dynamic peer support group are efficient to support bereaved children but practice modality and assessment need to be deepened.

2012

#### 44. Peer Relationships of Bereaved Siblings and Comparison Classmates After a Child's Death from Cancer

*JOURNAL OF PEDIATRIC PSYCHOLOGY*, 2012;37(2):209-219. Teachers reported bereaved siblings were more pro-social than comparison classmates. Peers perceived bereaved boys as more sensitive-isolated and victimized, while bereaved siblings in elementary grades were perceived by peers as less pro-social, more sensitive-isolated, less accepted, and as having fewer friends. Peers and teachers viewed bereaved siblings in middle/high school grades as higher on leadership–popularity. Bereaved siblings who were male and in elementary grades were more vulnerable to social difficulties, while those in middle/high school may exhibit some strengths. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/pTmsYE>

#### 45. Strengthening Classroom Emotional Support for Children Following a Family Member's Death

*SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNATIONAL*, 2012;33(3):243-262. National and international organizations have identified schools as having an unparalleled potential to offer supportive services for children's mental health needs. This article reviews research and practice related to children's grief and specifies strategies for classroom-based interventions. In particular, school psychologists are encouraged to assist teachers in addressing the needs of children following the death of a family member. A list of resources is included to assist school psychologists in sharing critical information with teachers, preparing them to implement suggested strategies. Additionally, two ready-to-use classroom lesson plans integrate classroom discussion and activities with grief-themed children's literature. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/zVpn35>

2011

#### 46. Grief, Loss and Trauma: Frequent Visitors to School Communities

*GRIEF MATTERS*, 2011;14(1):8-10. This article discusses the significance grief and trauma can have on the school community following the loss of a student or multiple students. The author discusses her experiences and the school response in a school that has lost four students over 12 years, three of which in complex, unexpected and traumatic incidents. Staff responsibilities and grief responses are discussed, and the Building Resilience Program, developed by the Israel Center for the Treatment of Psychotrauma, a teacher-based intervention program is examined as an effective system of teacher support that, in turn, allows staff to be more effective supports for trauma-bereaved students. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/fahJci>

#### 47. Supporting Children with Traumatic Grief: What Educators Need to Know

*SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNATIONAL*, 2011;32(2):117-131. Following traumatic deaths children may develop Childhood Traumatic Grief (CTG), a condition in which trauma symptoms interfere with adaptive child grieving. Key contributions educators can make are to: 1) Recognize CTG symptoms in school settings; 2) Refer children for mental health evaluations when appropriate; 3) Recognize reminders that trigger trauma symptoms and identify ways to manage these triggers and responses in school settings; 4) Support CTG treatments in school by reinforcing children's use of stress-management strategies; 5) Respect confidentiality; 6) Recognize the importance of cultural issues in CTG; and, 7) Maintain good communication with parents and other helping professionals. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/Gz7KAu>

## 48. Strengthening Grief Support for Children with Developmental Disabilities

*SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNATIONAL*, 2011;32(2):179-193. Although a sizable literature investigates and describes children's grief, the majority of information focuses on typically developing children. Far less has been published about the loss and grief of children with developmental disabilities (DD), even though this population experiences significant and multiple losses, increasing their vulnerability to negative outcomes. Addressing this gap in scholarship, this article explicates common losses and important grief-related challenges experienced by children with DD. An overview of practice guidelines is provided. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/zkVkk6>

2010

## 49. A Comparative Examination of Schools' Responses to Bereavement and the Associated Needs of the School Community in Galway, West of Ireland and Derry, Northern Ireland

*PASTORAL CARE IN EDUCATION*, 2010;28(3):235-252. The aim and objective of this study is to examine and compare how schools in Galway, Republic of Ireland and Derry in the North of Ireland (cities located within two independent jurisdictions in Ireland) manage and respond to bereavement. To carry out a survey of schools, the 'Loss in Schools' questionnaire is considered the most suitable tool. The questionnaire, which contains 10 questions designed to unearth pertinent issues including the needs and concerns of schools, had previously been administered in studies in Hull. Sixty questionnaires were administered in both Galway and Derry, with a return of 38 and 35, respectively. This study illuminates important aspects of the topic. The schools in both Galway and Derry rate bereavement (and parental separation) as highly important in terms of priorities. In terms of policy, some of the respondents in both study sites report that loss is included in their school's policy documents but not formally included in the curriculum. A designated staff member (who would speak to the pupil experiencing the death of a family member or significant other) is evident in 37% of Derry schools and 23% of Galway schools. Some members of staff in both study sites have attended training in bereavement, although the courses are relatively short term. Schools request assistance from other agencies outside the formal schools arena in times of need. In Galway the psychology services are most commonly consulted, while in Derry the Western Education & Library Board Bereavement Counselling teams and Cruse Bereavement Care are identified as additional resources from which help is sought. This paper outlines recommendations on schools' training needs in the area of child bereavement and the request for support to help further develop and formalise school policies. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/CDbSNS>

2008

## 50. How Schools Can Support Children Who Experience Loss and Death

*BRITISH JOURNAL OF GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING*, 2008;36(4):411-424. Scenes of public grieving such as followed the death of Princess Diana bear little resemblance to the "taboo" status of death and bereavement at an individual level. For schools and the support services with whom they work, responding to pupils' experiences of loss and death, especially of parents, is challenging. This paper draws on research and curriculum initiatives in one region in England to examine the current situation in schools. It then explores ways in which schools may be both more responsive when a death occurs, and more proactive in creating environments in which both pupils and their teachers are better prepared for the challenges which it poses. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/ScLpvD>



## 51. A Comparative Study of the Child Bereavement and Loss Responses and Needs of Schools in Hull, Yorkshire and Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland

*PASTORAL CARE IN EDUCATION*, 2008;26(4):253-266. This paper reports the findings from a study of schools' responses to child bereavement in Hull, Yorkshire and Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. In order to gain an insight and compare how schools in both geographical areas respond to and manage bereavement, the questionnaire 'Loss in schools' was selected as an appropriate tool. It has been utilised on previous occasions in Hull and shown to be an effective method of highlighting the issues, needs and concerns of schools. Some significant and important issues emerge in the results of the present survey. While schools rate child bereavement and parental separation highly in terms of their priorities, there is a shortfall in the number of schools in both study sites that have a formal procedure or policy in place around the management and response to death and loss. Although there is evidence that a number of staff have attended training in loss and bereavement, schools in Derry/Londonderry and Hull report that they have sought help from other agencies in times of need. For example, the Western Education & Library Board Bereavement Team and Cruse Bereavement Care (Derry/Londonderry) and the Educational Psychology Service (Hull) are identified. Schools are asking for help and support to develop policies and to gain the knowledge and skills they require to respond with confidence to a child who experiences a loss. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/kxR8EC>

2005

## 52. Responding to the Death of a Pupil – Reflections on one School's Experience

*BRITISH JOURNAL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION*, 2005;32(1):21-28. The authors describe the process by which bereavement within the school community became a valued learning opportunity within the school curriculum. Involving the parents as soon as possible was considered important and the responses of the parents of the bereaved child influenced the arrangements made by the school. Staff were available to children to help them come to terms with their bereavement and the tragic nature of the child's death. Decisions about the arrangements involved the school management team, the governors, the teaching staff, the non-teaching staff and the pupils represented by the school council consisting of elected members of each class. Staff were sensitive to children who were enabled to contribute in their own way and all parents were encouraged to involve themselves at the level at which they felt comfortable. At the end of this honest and moving article, the authors provide reflective and analytical comments about their shared experiences and offer a list of resources that will be of great relevance to practitioners. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/sYtYGJ>

2004

## 53. Helping Primary School Children Manage Loss and Grief: Ways the Classroom Teacher Can Help

*EDUCATION & HEALTH*, 2004;22(4):58060. In their daily lives, many young children are exposed to experiences of loss. It may be the death of a pet, a best friend moving far away, their parents getting a divorce, the death of a much loved grandparent. Primary school teachers are in an ideal situation to support children who may be experiencing loss and grief and to prepare all children for future (eventual) experiences of loss. Also occurs when anything that is valued or anyone we are attached to is removed from our lives. Grief is the process by which we adjust to living with a significant loss – it is the pain of "letting go." In this article the author examines some of the ways teachers can support children through their loss and grief experiences and how teachers can help to prepare all children to face their future loss experiences by giving them anticipatory education in their PSE classes. **Full text (click on pdf icon to access):** <https://goo.gl/p9NPfH>

2003

#### 54. Managing Bereavement in the Classroom: A Conspiracy of Silence?

*DEATH STUDIES*, 2003;27(8):717-741. The ways in which teachers in British schools manage bereaved children are underreported. This article reports the impact of students' bereavement and their subsequent management in primary and secondary school classrooms in Southeast London. Thirteen school staff working in inner-city schools took part in in-depth interviews that focused on the impact of bereaved children on the school and how teachers responded to these children. All respondents had previously had contact with a local child bereavement service that aims to provide support, advice, and consultancy to children, their parents, and teachers. Interviews were audio taped, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using ATLAS-ti. Three main themes were identified from analysis of interview data. Firstly, British society, culture, local communities, and the family were significant influences in these teachers' involvement with bereaved students. Secondly, school staff managed bereaved students through contact with other adults and using practical classroom measures such as "time out" cards and contact books. Lastly, teachers felt they had to be strong, even when they were distressed. Surprise was expressed at the mature reaction of secondary school students to deaths of others. The article recommends that future research needs to concentrate on finding the most effective way of supporting routinely bereaved children, their families, and teachers. **Abstracts (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/x7jgZq>

**N.B.** See 'Post-Death: In the Classroom' (pp.30-34) in 'Support Services for Grieving or Bereaved Children: Needs Assessment,' Children's Anticipatory Grief & Bereavement Collaborative, Region of Peel, Ontario, 2015.

## Grief Across Cultures

2015

### 55. Grief Across Cultures: Awareness for Schools

*SCHOOL NURSE* (U.S. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL NURSES), 2015;30(6):350-352. School personnel may not be familiar with the rituals and expectations of every culture represented among their students. Rather than reaching out to family after the death of a loved one, some hold back, concerned they might say something inappropriate or unintentionally offend the family. Although there are real differences between cultures, the fundamental experience of grief is universal. Chances are quite good that a school professional who is thoughtful, sensitive, and respectful will be able to help grieving students and provide meaningful support to their families, even if unfamiliar with their particular cultural practices related to bereavement. **First page view:** <https://goo.gl/6rw98o>

**N.B.** See 'Post-Death: Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Communities' (p.27) and 'Post-Death: Faith Communities' (p.28), in Support Services for Grieving or Bereaved Children: Needs Assessment,' Children's Anticipatory Grief & Bereavement Collaborative, Regional of Peel, Ontario, 2015. Scroll down to 'Grey Literature' and 'Masters' Thesis (University of Limerick, Ireland): The Challenges that Face the Primary School Teacher in Coping with Grief and Loss in a Multicultural Setting' (p.0).

## Academic Performance

2015

### 56. Teachers' Perception of Bereaved Children's Academic Performance

*ADVANCES IN SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION*, 2015;8(3):187-198. It is well documented that loss and trauma may lead to a reduction in school grades and an increase in the school dropout rate among school children. However, in order for the schools to support students in the best way after trauma and loss, it is of great importance that teachers are aware of these problems. In this study, the authors investigated the perceptions of the academic problems of bereaved students among 138 teachers and headmasters from six secondary and high schools. They administered questionnaires to the whole sample, and six focus group interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth knowledge from the same population. Teachers perceive a deterioration of school performance in grieving students. The teachers' perceptions are in accordance with what students report in studies. The teachers perceived grieving students as struggling with learning, showing reduced achievement in tests, and experiencing learning setbacks. There is a need for schools to try to remedy these problems in order for students to achieve their learning potential. The students' academic decline is not due to their lack of resources, but is a temporary setback due to the loss. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/CH6397>

2014

### 57. Parental Death During Childhood and Subsequent School Performance

*PEDIATRICS*, 2014;133(4):682-689. Parental death during childhood has been linked to increased mortality and mental health problems in adulthood. The authors investigated the association between parental death before age 15 years and school performance at age 15 to 16 years, taking into account potentially contributing factors such as family socioeconomic position (SEP) and parental substance abuse, mental health problems, and criminality. Parental death was associated with lower grades for paternal and maternal deaths, respectively. Adjustment for SEP and parental psychosocial factors weakened the associations, but the results remained statistically significant. The higher crude impact of death due to external causes (i.e., accident, violence, suicide) compared with natural deaths was not seen after adjustment for SEP and psychosocial situation of the family. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/qa6vTM>

**N.B.** Click on pdf icon to access full text.

2004

### 58. The Effect of Childhood Bereavement on Secondary School Performance

*EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE*, 2004;20(1):43-54. This paper reports on a U.K. survey of General Certificate of Secondary Education examination results for children from schools throughout England who had lost a parent or sibling through death to establish whether this had a long-term impact on school performance, levels of anxiety and self-esteem, and school attendance. Participants were matched for school, age, gender and ethnicity, and a smaller group for socio-economic status. The Spielberger Anxiety & Coopersmith self-esteem inventories were administered alongside a customised family history questionnaire. Bereaved participants underachieved significantly depending upon age, gender, and parents' employment history. There was also a significant rise in anxiety among the parentally bereaved group. School attendance seemed unaffected. Childhood bereavement appears to be a robust factor in underachievement. The totality of the survey findings is discussed prospectively in this paper. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/ZjNCNB>

## Issue Specific

2018

### 59. Assisting the School in Responding to a Suicide Death: What Every Psychiatrist Should Know

*CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC CLINICS OF NORTH AMERICA*, 2018;27(4): 607-619. When a child or adolescent dies by suicide, many individuals are affected, most of whom are attending school. Child and adolescent psychiatrists can be called on during the wake of such tragic events in order to help schools navigate the difficult tasks following a student suicide. Being familiar with suicide postvention guidelines is crucial for anyone involved in managing the events following a student suicide. By understanding the tenets of suicide postvention and resources that are available to schools and clinicians, the tragedy of suicide can also be an opportunity to improve school mental health and suicide prevention. **First page view:** <https://goo.gl/uWUAYL>

### 60. Assisting the School in Responding to a Suicide Death

*CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC* | Published online – 17 July 2018 – When a child or adolescent dies by suicide, many individuals are affected, most of whom are attending school. Child and adolescent psychiatrists can be called on during the wake of such tragic events in order to help schools navigate the difficult tasks following a student suicide. Being familiar with suicide postvention guidelines is crucial for anyone involved in managing the events following a student suicide. By understanding the tenets of suicide postvention and resources that are available to schools and clinicians, the tragedy of suicide can also be an opportunity to improve school mental health and suicide prevention. **Abstract (w. link to references):** <https://goo.gl/UFm2iV>

### 61. Medical Assistance in Dying: Implications for Canadian classrooms...

*INTERCHANGE* | Published online – 24 July 2018 – The recent passing of legislation decriminalizing medically assisted suicide was a landmark in Canadian history. Since the law's passage, an average of four Canadians per day have chosen to die using medical assistance. With Canadians embracing this option of death, the authors argue that there will be moments in Canadian schools when this topic will be brought into the classrooms. They outline how children view death both emotionally and conceptually, as well as how teachers can discuss death in their classrooms. The purpose is to provide a brief explanation of the law, an expiation of how children view death, and a framework for how teachers may be prepared to broach the topic when raised in their classrooms. **Abstract (inc. list of references):** <https://goo.gl/hJyggx>

### 62. Compassionate Education from Preschool to Graduate School: Bringing a Culture of Compassion into the Classroom

*JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN INNOVATIVE TEACHING & LEARNING*, 2018;11(1):22-66. The purpose of this paper is to make the case for bringing compassion to students in educational settings, preschool through graduate school. First, the author defines what is meant by "compassion" and differentiates it from the related constructs. Next, the author discusses the importance of bringing compassion into education, thinking specifically about preschool, K-12 (elementary and middle school/junior high/high school), college students, and graduate students (e.g., law, medical, nurses, counselors and therapists-in-training). The author then reviews the scant empirical literature on compassion in education and makes recommendations for future research. In the final section, the author makes specific and practical recommendations for the classroom (e.g., how to teach and evaluate compassion in PK-20). While there is a fair amount of research on compassion with college students, and specifically regarding compassion for oneself, as the author reviews in this paper, the field is wide open in terms of empirical research with other students and examining other forms of compassion. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/SP6SFK>

**N.B.** Click on pdf icon to access full text.

2015

### 63. Parental Divorce and Parental Death: An Integrative Systematic Review of Children's Double Bereavement

*CLINICAL NURSING STUDIES*, 2015;3(4):103-111. Even though a substantial proportion of children and adolescents who experience parental death or critical illness with imminent death have also previously experienced parental divorce, surprisingly few studies have investigated this double bereavement. The current review study indicates that these children and adolescents may be a vulnerable group and that we need more information about them. Needed is more information about what characterize these children and adolescents and to what extent they may need more or other types of support than other bereaved children and adolescents. If any special needs are identified support measures targeting these children and adolescents should be developed and evaluated. Such measures might include both nursing practice and multi-disciplinary practice. The lack of studies on double bereavement may perhaps reflect the fact that bereavement research and divorce research traditionally have been two separate research fields without much interchange. This is notable since both research fields focus on profound losses within family relationships. A corresponding separation also seems to exist when it comes to support measures aiming at individuals experiencing any of these losses.

**N.B.** Journal contents page (To access full text scroll down to 'Reviews' and click on pdf icon:  
<https://goo.gl/zSgqoP>

2012

### 64. Do-Not-Attempt-Resuscitation Orders in Public Schools

*AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION JOURNAL OF ETHICS*, 2012;12(7):569-572. Patterns of hospital and out-of-hospital medical decision making have evolved as our abilities to diagnose, treat, and palliate illness have improved. Ethical quandaries raised by these changes can impact not only those directly involved with decision making, but also the myriad people and systems indirectly affected by the individual health care choices of others. Pediatric patients receiving palliative care may still be well enough to benefit from attending school, and may at the same time have a do-not-attempt-resuscitation (DNAR) order in place. A parent's request to honor such an order in the public school setting is an example of a situation in which personal and individual parental decisions create ethically sensitive repercussions for others, including teachers, school nurses, classmates, administrators, school systems, local governments, and the legal system. During a study published in 2005, Kimberly *et al* determined that, in a sample of 81 school districts in the United States, relatively few (20%) reported having a policy, rule, or procedure explicitly regarding the honoring of DNAR orders for students with life-shortening medical conditions. Of these districts, 63 percent prohibited school personnel from honoring DNAR orders, and in the remainder school personnel were allowed to honor the orders, but many respondents reported that they would not. The authors learned that potentially confounding discrepancies existed between state laws and school board policies and that certain states did not allow advance health care decisions for minors in spite of having legalized out-of-hospital DNAR orders for adults. The authors concluded that policies should exist to allow DNAR orders for particular children in public schools when parents and physicians have agreed that attempting resuscitation is not in the child's best interest. To give ethical support for their conclusion, they drew upon respect for autonomy, beneficence, and nonmaleficence and discussed possible safety and legal repercussions. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/pYUJQw>

## Conference Abstracts (Selected)

### Teaching Transforms Lives: How Can Teacher Education Help Address Social Inequality (2018)

#### Educating children with life limiting and life threatening conditions

There are about 49,000 children and young people in the U.K. with a life limiting or life threatening condition; very many are in mainstream schools and the numbers are rising. Conditions include cancer, cerebral palsy, brain injury and Duchenne muscular dystrophy. This workshop shared the findings from research which sought to understand teachers' views and experiences of working with children with these conditions, and to identify the support that they need. The multi-disciplinary research team used the findings to write a practical handbook for teachers and school-based staff. It aims to address teachers' concerns about; medical care, responding to government policies, children's emotional and behavioural needs, bereavement, how to communicate with children, families and professionals, teaching and learning strategies, and a school culture that includes support for teachers. We will share the book and try to answer your questions.

**Abstract (w. link to ppt presentation):** <https://goo.gl/q2DmnL>

### International Public Health & Palliative Care Conference (2018)

#### Embracing Life: The Bethlehem Schools' Project, an "icebreaker" and "a foot in the door"

This workshop details a partnership involving a high school, a hospital (Calvary Health Care Bethlehem), La Trobe University and Palliative Care Victoria which seeks to support community capacity and resilience in dealing with life-limiting illness, death, dying and Loss. This alliance has produced an educational resource which may be used, not only as a tool to normalize death, but also as a means of exploring "keys to well-being" at any stage of life, through any loss or challenge. This workshop features a template which has been trialled, adapted and evaluated in high School, workshop and hospital induction settings within Australia. Responses thus far have been "overwhelmingly positive." Translating evidence of positive outcomes into education and health care systems, is a challenge – this workshop offers a means of approaching both. The conclusion of the workshop provides a number of insights: 1) Engaging communities in discussions about well-being and harnessing the insights of youth is a palatable means of discussing well-being at end-of-life (EoL); 2) What we know, as a community about supporting people with life-limiting illness is applicable across the span of life – not just at the end; and, 3) Just as it takes a village to raise a child – it takes a village to ensure a quality EoL experience. What began as a one-off hospital immersion for Secondary School students has grown to become a sustainable educational resource, applicable across a number of domains – with the capacity to become an evidence-based means of increasing community EoL capacity. This workshop details the evolution of a community partnership, which produced an evaluated, sustainable, educational resource encouraging conversations about death and loss whilst emphasizing the essentials of well-being. It is a potential "foot in the door" of the education system and an "icebreaker" for new staff/students to palliative care. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/RcShqR>

### Leading, Learning & Innovating (2017)

#### School is the link for children facing loss

*BMJ SUPPORTIVE & PALLIATIVE CARE:* As an adult and children's hospice we support children (4-18 years) and their siblings through our bereavement and pre-bereavement services. We provide counselling and therapeutic groups for all types of bereavement, and counselling for children living with progressive ill-health. Supporting the Government's agenda (Department for Education, 2016) to see all schools providing access to counselling, our unique schools link service was developed to support more children, and

expanded to cover any significant loss, not just bereavement. Our paid coordinator supports 74 schools by upskilling a member of school staff to support these children, whilst also identifying children who need specialised support with access to our trained counsellors. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/nbQs51>

## People, Partnerships & Potential (2016)

Empowering school staff to enable a balanced and healthy view of death, dying and bereavement throughout the school environment

*BMJ SUPPORTIVE & PALLIATIVE CARE:* The hospice received funding from the local Clinical Commissioning Group for a schools' project. The aim was to empower school staff to support pupils in their grief whilst enabling a more balanced and healthier view of death, dying and bereavement. The Family Support team consulted with local schools and bereaved families ascertaining what would help most. A programme of workshops was developed and rolled out to 16 schools. 159 staff attended over a two-year period. A resource pack was developed and given to each school. Workshops were evaluated by a snap survey, responses were positive and requests for more training resulted in the hospice developing a formalised training day. The 'One Step Beyond' training was rolled out. An increase in contact from schools was noted; i.e., The head teacher of a local primary school requested advice following the sudden death of a pupil. She described the distress of the pupils, parents, staff and of the wider community. Within 24 hours the hospice team had visited the head teacher. Support meetings were held with the head teacher on a one-to-one basis, group meetings with the parents and the staff, and the school was supported to provide an afternoon for the children where they were able to say goodbye through a variety of activities. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/xJdUXW>

## International Public Health & Palliative Care Conference (2015)

We can't do it alone: hospices and schools working together to educate and support children around death, dying and bereavement

*BMJ SUPPORTIVE & PALLIATIVE CARE:* Educating and supporting children around death, dying and bereavement, in schools, frequently relies on the individual interest and expertise of staff (Rowling 2003). Moves to develop such work of ten results in one off projects led by external agencies. Support and education is therefore ad hoc and unequitable. A programme of activities for children aged 5 to 11 (the resilience project) was designed and integrated throughout the curriculum. This is currently being piloted. A bereavement training programme was designed and facilitated to all school staff. Evaluations reported an increase in confidence around supporting bereavement issues. The process highlighted that combining the skills and expertise of hospice and school staff was essential in developing sustainable activities, appropriate to the setting. The role of the hospice in engaging with communities to collaboratively develop education and support around death, dying and bereavement was emphasised. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/wGpV8W>



## “Grey” Literature

### A Road Less Lonely: Moving Forward with Public Health Approaches to Death, Dying and Bereavement in Scotland

SCOTTISH PARTNERSHIP FOR PALLIATIVE CARE – 16 May 2018 – This report, published jointly with the charity Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief, explores some of the different areas that can shape people’s experiences of death, dying and bereavement. It focuses particularly on: death education and bereavement support in schools; workplace culture and policies; the role of communities; the practicalities of planning ahead for deteriorating health and death; personal skills and knowledge relating to death, dying and bereavement; mass media campaigns; socio-economic disadvantage; and, funeral poverty. This report highlights a range of projects and initiatives ongoing in Scotland and further afield relevant to improving people’s experiences of death, dying and bereavement. **Download/view at:** <https://goo.gl/FFkn3i>

**N.B.** See Section 4 (p.15). This section of the report explores how schools in Scotland can be encouraged and supported to provide education and support around death, dying and bereavement for children and staff in primary and secondary education.

### Open Access Institutional Repository (Robert Gordon University): School Pupils and Their Understanding of Significant Change and Losses in Life

The impact of bereavement in childhood is significant. The Childhood Bereavement Network suggests that 78% of 11-16 year olds in the U.K. have experienced the death of a close relative or friend. Children respond to bereavement in different ways depending on their age and understanding of death. Further evidence suggests that bereaved children experience considerable anxiety in addition to underachieving at school. Pallium Canada, who funded the research, is a Canadian national organisation created to improve the quality of hospice and palliative care services through the development and dissemination of peer-reviewed education, resources and clinical decision-making tools for interprofessional health care providers. Pallium Canada’s Compassionate Schools initiative defines a compassionate school as one that includes death education as part of its curriculum and policies and provides a supportive community for pupils, staff and parents. Pallium Canada highlights that ‘all natural cycles of sickness and health, birth and death, and love and loss occur every day within these educational institutions.’ This study, involving pupils, parents and staff, sought to understand young people’s perceptions of loss, death and dying. This collaborative qualitative pilot study was undertaken in conjunction with colleagues in Canada and was designed to gain knowledge of how children of different ages understand loss, death and dying; the support they access and their awareness of what is available to them. The pupils in Canada were of primary school age; whereas the study’s Scottish component involved one secondary school with participants aged between 12-18 years. This report focuses on the findings from the Scotland study. **Abstract:** <https://goo.gl/DPVq6n>

### U.S. National Association of Secondary School Principals (Counseling 101): Dealing With Death at School

Nearly every principal will be faced with the death of a student or faculty member during his or her career. How schools respond to a death can either help or hinder the healing process, and the principal sets the tone for the level of assistance that is provided following a death at school. Prior planning, empathic leadership, and teachable moments promote healing among students and staff members after the death of a member of the school community. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/RrfacS>

## Doctoral Thesis (Northeastern University Boston, Massachusetts): Bereavement in the Classroom: How Teachers Respond to Grief at School

Whether stemming from a tragic event in the life of a child such as the loss of a parent, or a community-devastating occurrence such as a natural disaster, it is likely that in the course of every school year teachers will encounter some facet of bereavement in school. Despite the frequency of such events and the seemingly wide availability of training resources, there are questions about the degree to which teachers feel trained or prepared to respond in these situations (National Commission for Children and Disasters Interim Report, 2009). Several possible causes explain the gap between theory and practice, such as a lack of understanding of the needs of bereaved students or teachers' personal anxiety about raising these issues in the classroom (Atkinson, 1980; Cullinan, 1990; Hare & Cunningham, 1988; Lowton & Higginson, 2003; Pratt, Hare & Wright, 1985; Reid & Dixon, 1999), but little is known about the factors that teachers consider when determining the actions that they will or will not take to address the needs of grieving children. The purpose of this qualitative study was to utilize teachers' experiences and voices to better understand the internal or external barriers that interfere with their sense of efficacy when implementing best classroom practices in response to bereavement related situations at school. This study focused on the perspectives of 37 elementary, middle, and high school teachers from seven suburban school districts and an educational collaborative in western Massachusetts. **Full text:** <https://goo.gl/icfNy7>

## Masters' Thesis (University of Limerick, Ireland): The Challenges that Face the Primary School Teacher in Coping with Grief and Loss in a Multicultural Setting

Death is a fact of life. The primary school teacher is often at the forefront of the child's life and therefore has to be able to help a child who has suffered a bereavement to cope with this loss. During my teaching years, my years of supervising/mentoring students on school placement and my years of facilitating bereavement support groups, I became aware of the fact that, often, people are not comfortable talking about death, dying, grief and loss. Thanatology, or death education, focuses on the human and emotional aspects of death. Whereas there is a general agreement amongst parents and educators that there is a place for death education in our schools, there are conflicting attitudes regarding the type of approaches which should be applied and their relevance and appropriateness to the age and developmental stage of the child. Research has shown that teachers do not feel adequately prepared to cope with grief and loss in the classroom. This study investigates the question of grief and loss from the perspective of the primary school teacher and attempts to assess what key initiatives are required to improve the preparation of the teacher to face the challenges posed by these issues when they arise in a school setting. This research aims to address this situation, initiate meaningful discussion and identify possible solutions. Few studies have examined the cultural differences that impact on the teacher's or child's understanding of grief and loss. Death education in Ireland cannot be considered without taking into account the possible cultural and religious differences within the now culturally diverse classroom. The study considers the impact of the growing multicultural school environment and how that also impacts on the challenges to, and responses of, the teacher. The findings are expected to provide some new insights into how Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development could encompass new approaches to improve the preparation of teachers and develop their capability of dealing with grief and loss in the multicultural classroom.

**N.B.** Enter the title of the thesis into Google to access pdf copy of full text.

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## Appendix

### Potential Resources & Sources of Information (Identified during the course of the literature search)

1. **Canadian Virtual Hospice:** 'Support Services for Grieving/Bereaved Children' (2015) [http://www.virtualhospice.ca/en\\_US/Utilities/Search.aspx?q=ashpole](http://www.virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Utilities/Search.aspx?q=ashpole)
2. **Child Bereavement UK:** 'For Schools.' <https://childbereavementuk.org/for-schools/>
3. **Child Research.net (Japan):** 'Death Education as it Relates to Children and Their Caregivers.' [https://www.childresearch.net/papers/health/2011\\_03.html](https://www.childresearch.net/papers/health/2011_03.html)
4. **Dying Matters (U.K.):** 'Dying Matters school lesson plan.' <https://www.dyingmatters.org/page/SchoolLessonPlan>
5. **Education Project Inc. (Canada):** 'Loss, Growth & Grief' (2012) [http://www.virtualhospice.ca/en\\_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home/Support/Resources/Books\\_+Links\\_+and+More/Children\\_+About/Online+Resources/Loss\\_+Grief+and+Growth\\_+Educational+Project+Inc\\_.aspx](http://www.virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home/Support/Resources/Books_+Links_+and+More/Children_+About/Online+Resources/Loss_+Grief+and+Growth_+Educational+Project+Inc_.aspx)
6. **eHospice (UK):** 'Death and bereavement on the school curriculum.' (2018) [https://ehospice.com/inter\\_childrens\\_posts/death-and-bereavement-on-the-school-curriculum/](https://ehospice.com/inter_childrens_posts/death-and-bereavement-on-the-school-curriculum/)
7. **Hospital For Sick Children (Canada):** 'Cultural Competence.' <http://www.sickkids.ca/tclhinculturalcompetence/index.html>
8. **Huffington Post (U.S.):** 'Tips for Teaching a Death and Dying Class in Your Community.' (2015) [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/karen-m-wyatt-md/tips-for-teaching-a-death\\_b\\_7066898.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/karen-m-wyatt-md/tips-for-teaching-a-death_b_7066898.html)
9. **The Groundswell Project (Australia):** 'Creating a Cultural Shift in the Way Australians respond to death and grief.' <http://www.thegroundswellproject.com/>
10. **Joseph's Inspirational Services (Canada):** 'Bereavement In Our Catholic Schools.'  
  
N.B. To access, search Google for 'St. Joseph's Inspirational Services, Bereavement in Our Catholic schools.'
11. **Glasgow City Council and NHS greater Glasgow & Clude (U.K.):** 'A Whole School Approach to Supporting Loss, Separation & Bereavement.' (2017) <https://www.mentally-healthyschools.org.uk/resources/a-whole-school-approach-to-supporting-loss-and-bereavement/?page=1#>
12. **National Center for School Crises & Bereavement (U.S.):** 'Guidelines for Responding to the Death of a Student or School Staff.' <https://www.schoolcrisiscenter.org/search-results/?q=Guidelines+for+Responding+to+the+Death+of+a+Student+or+School+Staff>
13. **PalliMed (U.S.):** 'Dying to Know: Situating Death Education in Schools.' <https://www.pallimed.org/2016/02/dying-to-know-situating-death-education.html>
14. **Pets in the Classroom:** 'Grief in the Classroom: How to Handle the Death of a Classroom Pet.' <https://www.petsintheclassroom.org/how-to-handle-the-death-of-a-classroom-pet/>

15. **Psychology Today (U.S.):** 'The Do's and Don'ts of Talking with a Child about Death.' (2016) <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/two-takes-depression/201612/the-dos-and-donts-talk-ing-child-about-death>
16. **Scholastic (U.S.):** 'Coping With Grief in the Classroom.' (Undated) <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/coping-grief-classroom/>
17. **St. Christopher's Schools Project (U.K.):** <http://www.stchristophers.org.uk/schools-project/>
18. **Sussex Snowdrop Trust (U.K.):** 'Promoting Empathy and Coping Strategies in Schools: A Living Resource Pack for Terminal Illness & Bereavement.' University of Chichester student project (2015)  
  
    **N.B.** To access, search Google for 'Promoting Empathy and Coping Strategies in Schools.'
19. **The Temmy Latner Center for Palliative Care** (Mt. Sinai Hospital, Toronto, Canada): 'Supporting Grieving Students in School.'  
  
    **N.B.** To access, search Google for 'Supporting Grieving Students in School, The Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care.'
20. **Together for Short Lives (U.K.):** 'Grief and bereavement in schools.' <https://www.togetherfor-shortlives.org.uk/?s=schools>
21. **Winston Wishes (U.K.):** 'Support for Schools.' (2018) <https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>
22. **Winston Wishes (U.K.):** 'How school teachers can help bereaved children.' <https://www.winstonswish.org/how-school-teachers-can-help-bereaved-children/>
23. **Alan D. Wolfelt PhD (U.S.):** 'Helping Grieving Children at School.' [http://griefwords.com/index.cgi?action=page&page=articles%2Fhelping31.html&site\\_id=7](http://griefwords.com/index.cgi?action=page&page=articles%2Fhelping31.html&site_id=7)