

# HOSPICARE AND PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

*of Tompkins County, Inc.*

## SELECTED LITERATURE FOR ADOLESCENTS: ANNOTATED DESCRIPTIONS

Arrick, F. (1980). *Tunnel Vision*. Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury. After Anthony hangs himself at 15, his family, friends, and teachers cope with feelings of bewilderment and guilt. There is no easy resolution for such feelings, but important questions are posed: What should be done in the face of serious problems? Where should one turn for help?

Bernstein, J.E. (1977). *Loss: And How to Cope with it*. New York: Clarion. This book provides knowledgeable advice for young readers about how to cope with loss through death. Topics include what happens when someone dies; children's concepts of death; feelings in bereavement; living with survivors; handling feelings; deaths of specific sorts (for example, parents, grandparents, friends, pets); traumatic deaths (such as suicide or murder); and the legacy of survivors.

Blume, J. (1981). *Tiger Eyes*. Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury. After Davey's father is killed at the age of 34 during a holdup of his 7-Eleven store in Atlantic City, Davey (age 15), her mother, and her younger brother all react differently and are unable to help each other in their grief. They attempt a change of location to live temporarily with Davey's aunt in Los Alamos, but they eventually decide to move back to New Jersey to rebuild their lives.

Boulden, J., & Boulden, J. (1994). *The Last Goodbye I*. Weaverville, CA: Boulden Publishing (P.O. Box 1186, Weaverville, CA 96093-1186). This activity book offers exercises designed for children at about grade level 5-8 to process feelings and issues that surround death. Also available in a Spanish version.

Brisson, P. (1999). *Sky Memories*. New York: Delacorte. While her mother struggles with cancer and before she dies, Emily (age 10) and Mom develop a ritual to celebrate and commemorate their relationship. Together they gather "sky memories," mental pictures of the ever-changing sky in all its variety and wonder. The sky seems to reflect the phases of Mom's illness and the vitality of her soul.

Cleaver, V., & Cleaver B. (1970). *Grover*. Philadelphia: Lippincott. When Grover was 11, his mother became terminally ill and took her own life, as she thought, to "spare" herself and her family the ravages of her illness. His father cannot face the facts of this death or the depth of his grief, so he tries to hold his feelings inside and convince his son it was an accident. Issues posed include: whether one must endure life no matter what suffering it holds; whether religion is a comfort; and how one should deal with grief.

Crawford, B.B., & Lazar, L. (1999). *In My World: A Journal for Young People Facing Life-Threatening Illness*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation (P.O. Box 4600, Omaha, NE 68104-0600). This journal format is designed to help teenagers who are coping with a life-threatening

illness make a record of their lives and give expression to thoughts, feelings, and worries that they may find difficult to share with family members and friends.

Dragonwagon, C. (1990). *Winter Holding Spring*. New York: Atheneum/Simon & Schuster. At first, nothing is the same for 11-year old Sarah and her father after her mother dies. Each is in great pain, but gradually they begin to share their experiences and their memories of Sarah's mother. Eventually, they realize together that "nothing just ends without beginning the next thing at the same time" (p. 11). Each season somehow contains its successor; life and love and grief can continue together, for winter always holds spring. And Sarah knows that "love is alive in me and always will be" (p. 31).

Farley, C. (1975). *The Garden Is Doing Fine*. New York: Atheneum. While dying of cancer, Corrie's father inquires about his beloved garden. Corrie can neither tell him that the garden is dead nor can she lie. Instead, she searches for reasons to explain why a good person like her father would die. She also tries to bargain with herself and with God to preserve her father's life. A wise neighbor helps Corrie see that even though there may be no reasons for her father's death, she and her brothers are her father's real garden. The seeds that he has planted in them will live on and she can let go without betraying him.

Fox, P. (1995). *The Eagle Kite*. New York: Orchard Books. Liam Cormac struggles to make sense of things when his father develops AIDS, moves out of their home to a rented cabin, and eventually dies. Liam is confused, puzzled by the half-truths he is told, and unable to understand his mother and his aunt's very different reactions. Eventually, Liam recalls a day when he was flying his eagle kite and he came upon his father embracing another man. He realizes his father is gay and comes to terms with this by sharing it with his father and later telling his mother what he had seen.

Frank, A. (1993). *The Diary of a Young Girl*. New York: Bantam. A young girl's classic record of her thoughts about events when she and her family had to hide from the Nazis in Amsterdam during World War II because they were Jewish.

Girard, L. W. (1991). *Alex, the Kid with AIDS*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman. Alex, the new kid in the fourth grade class, is at first treated differently and left out of some activities because he has AIDS. Gradually Michael comes to appreciate Alex's weird sense of humor and they become friends. And their teacher realizes that Alex needs to be treated as a member of the class, not as someone odd or special.

Grollman, S. (1988). *Shira: A Legacy of Courage*. New York: Doubleday. Shira Putter died at age 9 in 1983 from a rare form of diabetes. This book tells Shira's story on the basis of her own writings and personal accounts from family members and friends in a way that celebrates courage, love, and hope in a life containing much hardship.

Heegaard, M.E. (1990). *Coping with Death and Grief*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications. This book describes change, loss, and death as natural parts of life, provides information and advice about coping with feelings, and suggests ways to help oneself and others who are grieving.

Jampolsky, G.G., & Murray, G. (Eds.). (1982). *Straight from the Siblings: Another Look at the Rainbow*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts. From the Center for Attitudinal Healing. Brothers and sisters of children who have a life-threatening illness write about the feelings of siblings and ways to help all of the children who are involved in such difficult situations.

Jampolsky, G.G., & Taylor, P. (Eds). (1978). *There Is a Rainbow Behind Every Dark Cloud*. Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts. Eleven children, 8 to 19 years old, explain what it is like to have a life-threatening illness and the choices that youngsters have in helping themselves (for example, when first told about one's illness, in going back to school, coping with feelings, and talking about death).

LeShan, E. (1976). *Learning to Say Good-by: When a Parent Dies*. New York: Macmillan. This book offers advice to bereaved children and the adults around them on a broad range of topics, including: what grief is like; the importance of honesty, trust, sharing, and funerals; fear of abandonment and guilt; accepting the loss of the deceased, maintaining a capacity for love, and meeting future changes.

Little, J. (1984). *Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird*. New York: Viking Kestrel. Jeremy and his younger sister, Sarah, only learn that their father is dying from cancer by overhearing people talk about it. They experience many losses, large and small, that accompany his dying and death, often compounded by lack of information and control over their situation. Their need for support from others is clear.

Mann, P. (1977). *There Are Two Kinds of Terrible*. New York: Doubleday/Avon. Robbie's broken arm is one kind of terrible—but it ends. His mother's death seems to leave Robbie and his "cold fish" father with no conclusion. They are together, but each grieves alone until they begin to find ways to share their suffering and their memories.

Maple, M. (1992). *On the Wings of a Butterfly: A Story about Life and Death*. Seattle: Parenting Press. Lisa, a child dying of cancer, and Sonya, her caterpillar friend, share insights and experiences as Lisa approaches her death and Sonya prepares for her transformation into a Monarch butterfly.

McCaleb, J. (1998). *Our Hero, Freebird: An Organ Donor's Story*. Chattanooga, TN: Tennessee Donor Services (651 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 402, Chattanooga, TN 37403: 423-576-5736). This spiral-bound book is a memorial to Chuck Foster, who died of an aneurysm and became an organ donor in 1996 just before he was to enter eighth grade. Words, pictures, and art from his classmates, along with letters from his transplant recipients and some of their family members, speak about Chuck and about organ donation.

Paterson, K. (1977). *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: Corwell. Jess and Leslie have a special, secret meeting place in the woods, called Terabithia. But when Leslie is killed one day in an accidental fall, the magic of their play and friendship is disrupted. Jess mourns the loss of this special relationship, is supported by his family, and ultimately is able to initiate new relationships that will share friendship in a similar way with others.

Richter, E. (1986). *Losing Someone You Love: When a Brother or Sister Dies*. New York: Putnam's. fifteen adolescents describe in their own words how they feel in response to a wide variety of experiences of sibling death.

Rofes, E.E. (Ed.), and the Unit at Fayerweather Street School (1985). *The Kids' Book about Death and Dying, by and for Kids*. Boston: Little, Brown. The result of a class project, this book describes what its 11- to 14-year old authors learned about a wide range of death-related topics, making clear what children want to know about these subjects and how they want adults to talk to them. One main lesson is that "a lot of the mystery and fear surrounding death has been brought about by ignorance and avoidance" (p. 111). Another lesson is expressed in the hope "that children can lead the way in dealing with death and dying with a healthier and happier approach" (p. 144).

Romond, J.L. (1989). *Children Facing Grief: Letters from Bereaved Brothers and Sisters*. St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press. In the form of letters to a friend, this book records the observations of 18 children (ages 6-15) who have each experienced the death of a brother or sister. Helpful comments from young people who have been there in grief.

Rudin, C. (1998). *Children's Books about the Holocaust: A Selective Annotated Bibliography*. Bayside, NY: The Holocaust Resource Center & Archives, Queensborough Community College, CUNY (718-225-1617). An annotated guide to this important body of literature for children from grade 4 onwards, containing lists of bibliography and memoirs, fiction, nonfiction, and reference works, as well as indexes by grade, title, and subject.

Shura, M.F. (1988). *The Sunday Doll*. New York: Dodd, Mead. This is a complex and richly textured story of a 13-year-old girl whose parents exclude her from something terrible involving her older sister (the suicide of a boyfriend) and who is frightened by her Aunt Harriet's life-threatening "spells" (transient ischemia attacks). Like the Amish doll without a face, Emily learns that she has her own strengths and can choose which face to present to the world.

Sternberg, E., & Sternberg, B. (1980). *If I Die and When I Do: Exploring Death with Young People*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. This book is the result of a nine-week middle school course on death and dying. The text mainly consists of drawings, poems, and statements by the students on various death-related topics, plus a closing chapter of 25 suggested activities.

Traisman, E.S. (1992). *Fire in My Heart, Ice in My Veins: A Journal for Teenagers Experiencing a Loss*. Omaha, NE: 68104-0600). The aim here is provide a print vehicle that can be used as a journal by teenagers who have experienced a loss. A line or two of text on each page and many small drawings offer age-appropriate prompts for this purpose.

Traisman, E.S., & Sieff, J. (Comps.). (1995). *Flowers for the Ones You've Known: Unedited Letters from Bereaved Teens*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation (P.O. Box 4600, Omaha, NE 68104-0600). In this support book for teens, unedited letters and poems written by bereaved peers are reproduced in various handwritten in print formats.

Wiener, L.S. Best, A., & Pizzo, P.A. (Comps.). (1994). *Be a Friend: Children Who Live with HIV Speak*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman. The vivid colors, drawings, and layout in this book seek to permit children living with HIV infection to speak in their own voices. The result is sometimes poignant, often charming, and always compelling. For example, one 11-year-old writes: "I often wonder how other children without AIDS learn to appreciate life. That's the best part about having AIDS." (p. 13).

## Literature for High School Readers

Agee, J. (1969). *A Death in the Family*. New York: Bantam. This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel unerringly depicts the point of view of two children in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1915 when they are told of the accidental death of their father. Agee skillfully portrays ways in which the children experience unusual events, sense strange tensions within the family, struggle to understand what has happened, and strive to work out their implications.

Barnouw, D., & Van der Stroom, G. (Eds.). (1989). *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition*. Trans. A.J. Pomerans & B. M. Mooyaart Doubleday. New York: Doubleday. A more sophisticated version (with commentaries) of this classic record of a young girl's life while

hiding from the Nazis in occupied Holland during World War II. (See the entry earlier in this appendix under Frank, A.).

Bode, J. (1993). *Death is Hard to Live With: Teenagers and How They Cope with Death*. New York: Delacorte. Teenagers speak frankly about how they cope with death and loss.

Boulden, J., & Boulden, J. (1994). *The Last Goodbye II*. Weaverville, CA: Boulden Publishing (P.O. Box 1186, Weaverville, CA 96093-1186). This activity book offers exercises designed for youngsters at about grade level 9-12 to process feelings and issues that surround death. *Similar to The Last Goodbye I*, but including topics like suicide and not acting in a destructive manner that are appropriate to these older readers.

Craven, M. (1973). *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*. New York: Dell. This novel describes a young Episcopal priest with a terminal illness. He is sent by his bishop to live with Native Americans in British Columbia, who believe that death will come, when the owl calls someone's name. From them, the bishop hopes that the young priest will learn to face his own death.

Deaver, J. R. (1988). *Say Goodnight, Gracie*. New York: Harper & Row. When her close friend, Jimmy, is killed by a drunken driver in an automobile accident, Morgan is so disoriented by the extent of her loss that she is unable to face her feelings, attend Jimmy's funeral, or speak to his parents. Her own parents offer support and tolerate Morgan's withdrawal from the world, but it is not until a wise aunt intervenes that Morgan is able to confront her feelings in a way that leads her to more constructive coping and to decide to go on with living.

Geller, N. (1987). *The Last Teenage Suicide*. Auburn, ME: Normal Geller Publishing (P.O. Box 3217, Auburn, ME 04210). Text and pen-and-ink drawings describe the death by suicide of a high school senior, together with reactions from his family, friends, and acquaintances. The death mobilizes the community to develop a program to identify and respond to the needs of those who are potentially suicidal or hurting emotionally with the goal of making this the last teenage suicide in their community.

Greenberg, J. (1979). *A Season In-Between*. New York: Farrar. Carrie Singer, a seventh grader, copes with the diagnosis of her father's cancer in spring and his death that summer. She draws on the rabbinical teaching: turn scratches on a jewel into a beautiful design.

Gunther, J. (1949). *Death Be Not Proud: A Memoir*. New York: Harper. An early biographical account of the author's 15-year-old son and his lengthy struggle with a brain tumor.

Hughes, M. (1984). *Hunter in the Dark*. New York: Atheneum. A boy with overprotective parents sets out to face life and death on his own by confronting threats at different levels: his leukemia and the challenge of going hunting in the Canadian woods for the first time.

Klagsbrun, F. (1976). *Too Young To Die: Youth and Suicide*. New York: Houghton Mifflin; paperback edition by Pocket Books, 1977. A clear, informed, and readable introduction to the myths and realities surrounding youth suicide, with useful advice for helpers. Other books for young readers about suicide include W. Colman, *Understanding and Preventing Teen Suicide* (Chicago: Children's Press, 1990); D.B. Francis, *Suicide: A Preventable Tragedy* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989); S. Gardner & G. Rosenberg, *Teenage Suicide* (New York: Messner, 1985); M.O. Hyde & E.H. Forsyth, *Suicide: The Hidden Epidemic* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1986); J. Kolehmainen & S. Handwerk, *Teen Suicide: A Book for Friends, Family, and Classmates* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner, 1986); J.M. Leder, *Dead Serious: A Book for Teenagers about Teenage Suicide* (New York: Atheneum, 1987); and J. Schleifer, *Everything You Need to Know about Teen Suicide* (rev. ed.; New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 1991).

Lewis, C.S. (1976). *A Grief Observed*. New York: Bantam. The author, a celebrated British writer and lay theologian, recorded his experiences of grief on notebooks lying around the house. The published result is an unusual and extraordinary document, a direct and honest expression of one individual's grief that has helped innumerable readers by normalizing their own experiences in bereavement.

Martin, A.M. (1986). *With You and Without You*. New York: Holiday House; paperback by Scholastic. Family members (parents and four children) struggle to cope when the father is told that he will soon die as a result of an inoperable heart condition. Before his death, each member of the family tries to make the father's remaining time as good as possible; afterward, they strive to cope with their losses. One important lesson is that no one is ever completely prepared for a death; another is that each individual must cope in his or her own way.

Muller, M. (1998). *Anne Frank: The Biography*. Trans. R & R. Kimber. New York: Metropolitan. A new exploration of the life and death of a young Jewish girl in occupied Holland during World War II.

O'Toole, D. (1995). *Facing Change: Falling Apart and Coming Together Again in the Teen Years*. Burnsville, NC: Compassion Books (477 Hannah Branch Road, Burnsville, NC 28714). This little book is intended to help adolescents understand loss, grief, and change, and to think about how they might respond to those experiences.

Pendleton, E. (Comp.) (1980). *Too Old To Cry. Too Young to Die*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. Thirty-five teenagers describe their experiences in living with cancer, including treatments, side effects, hospitals, parents, siblings, and friends.

Scirvani, M. (1991). *When Death Walks In*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation (P.O. Box 4600, Omaha, NE 68104-0600). This little booklet was written to help teen readers explore the many facets of grief and how one might cope with them in productive ways.

Tolstoy, L. (1960). *The Death of Ivan Ilych and Other Stories*. New York: New American Library. The title story is an exceptional piece of world literature in which a Russian magistrate in the prime of his life is afflicted with a grave illness that becomes steadily more serious. As his health deteriorates, Ivan suddenly realizes that glib talk in college about mortality does not apply only to other people or humanity in general. He also discovers that many around him gradually withdraw and become more guarded in what they say to him; only one servant and his young son treat him with real compassion and candor.

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