



Media information pack 2011

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Websites: www.cruse.org.uk www.rd4u.org.uk (for children and young people)

Bereavement helpline: 0844 477 9400

Address: Central Office, PO Box 800, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RG

Synopsis

The death of someone close can be devastating. Bereaved people can feel vulnerable, desperate and even suicidal.

Established in 1959, the charity Cruse Bereavement Care takes care of the life that's left providing advice, information and support to anyone who has been bereaved (children, young people and adults), whenever or however the death occurred. The service is provided by trained, experienced volunteers and is confidential and free.

Cruse is the UK's leading bereavement care organisation. Through our network of 135 branches across England, Wales and Northern Ireland Cruse responds to nearly 100,000 requests for support each year. In 2009-10 Cruse volunteers provided 570,000 hours of support to bereaved people.

Cruse draws on its expertise in the field of bereavement to influence Government policy and improve society's understanding about grief and the needs of bereaved people.

Key statistics from 2009/10

- **100,000** people sought support from Cruse (up by 5%)
- **32,700** bereaved people received one-to-one support
- **2,500** children and young people received one-to-one support
- **300,000 hits** to www.rd4u.co.uk Cruse's dedicated website for children and young people
- **1,700** people bereaved by suicide supported
- **17%** increase in the number of children and young people helped
- **4.5%** increase in the number of men supported

Cruse support services

One-to-one support

In the last three years the number of people receiving one-to-one bereavement support from Cruse has **risen by almost 41%**, with over 32,400 supported in 2009/10. Cruse helps bereaved people to understand their grief, recognise the impact of bereavement and cope better with their loss.

Support groups

Cruse offers facilitated support and friendship groups. Specialist groups are run for those bereaved through suicide, murder and manslaughter.

National helpline

Our national helpline provides immediate access to support and information including welfare advice to bereaved people as well as those supporting them. The national helpline also responds to professionals needing advice and guidance.

Email support

Cruse provides email support to those people who prefer to communicate via this medium.

Support for children and young people

Cruse supports more bereaved children and young people than any other organisation throughout the UK. Cruse provides the following range of services:

- One-to-one bereavement support
- Free-phone helpline: **0808 808 1677**
- Specialist website for children and young people - www.rd4u.co.uk
- Practical advice for parents/carers/teachers supporting a bereaved child or young person - www.cruse.org.uk
- Publications
- Training courses for those working with bereaved children and young people
- Support for schools

Supporting the Armed Services

With expert leadership from Jenny Green OBE, Cruse embarked on a project to identify the additional complications that can result from a death in service and has explored ways to bridge gaps in support to those affected by in-service deaths. These have been done with assistance from:

- The Cruse Advisory Board, made up of representatives from organisations including the Army Welfare Section, RAF community support, Naval Welfare and Support, Principal Amport House, the Royal British Legion, SAFFA, SPVA, and the MOD
- The User Group, comprised of those who have lost loved ones whilst serving in the Forces

Cruse has developed specialised training that enables Cruse's Bereavement Volunteers to effectively support those affected by a death in the Services. These volunteers provide an accessible, individualised service and support people in their own homes or at a community location. Support is provided whenever it is needed, in the immediate aftermath of a death or months or even years later.

Cruse has also:

- Produced a training DVD *Behind Every Headline is Heartache*
- Produced a new section of the Cruse website dedicated to supporting the military family, which includes videos, podcasts and a wealth of useful information
- Created new leaflets aimed specifically at the Armed Services, which are being distributed across all the Services through the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell
- Made information about access to bereavement support available to serving personnel in "credit card" format

Cruse is acutely aware that service deaths can particularly affect children and young people, and provides a range of information and care that can help them deal with their grief. In particular it has distributed literature to over 4,000 state schools, produced guidance on how parents can support their children and endeavoured to make more service children aware of where they can go for help.

In particular, RD4U (www.rd4u.org.uk) has been a valuable resource for children and young people who want to share their feelings and chat to others in a similar situation.

"i am almost 12 i lost my brother in 2005 in iraq i really need someone to talk to i have other brothers and sisters but i dont really like talk to them as i upset them. i miss him more than i can explain and i can feel the memories slowly slipping away and as he was in the army i didnt see him very often please help me"

Niki, on the RD4U message-board

Responding to major incidents

Cruse volunteers have provided immediate support following major incidents including to:

- Families and individuals affected by the 9/11 terrorist strike both in New York and in the UK
- People returning to the UK after the 26 December 2004 tsunami
- People visiting the Family Assistance Centre following the July 2005 bombings in London

These services were commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Metropolitan Police, Westminster City Council and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Cruse has a network of specially trained disaster response volunteers who can be mobilised in the event of a major incident occurring.

Training and consultancy services

Cruse has a diverse team of qualified, experienced trainers throughout the UK who deliver a range of core training programmes and bespoke courses across the statutory, private and voluntary sectors. Cruse provides consultancy services drawing upon its vast expertise within the field of bereavement.

Sector leading journal - *Bereavement Care*

Bereavement Care is an international journal written for the academic, the professional and the lay reader and is recognised as the leading academic periodical within the field of bereavement. Published three times a year by Routledge in association with Cruse, it provides reliable, accessible evidence-based information and discussion on all aspects of bereavement care.

Literature and publications

Cruse provides a wide range of helpful publications for bereaved people and those working with them. They are available in print or online at www.cruse.org.uk. In addition to the free material provided our online bookshop stocks a wide range of publications to aid both bereaved people of all ages and professionals in the field.

Our people - Cruse volunteers

Cruse's services are delivered throughout a network of some 5,700 volunteers covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our volunteers come from all avenues of life and each brings their own experiences and expertise to their respective roles within the organisation. A significant number of our bereavement volunteers have themselves received support from Cruse.

As well as those who work directly with bereaved people, volunteers also fulfil other roles such as management, administration and fundraising. Cruse is committed to the continuing professional development of all our volunteers and many go on to support children and young people or the military family specifically.

Representing the needs of bereaved people

Cruse is committed to influencing Government policy and improving society's understanding about grief and the needs of bereaved people. As evidenced by the following:

- *Standards for Bereavement Care in the UK*, developed in 2001 by Cruse et al, is recommended by the 2004 NICE guidance on palliative care
- Cruse is represented on the Department of Health Working Group on Bereavement; the Coroners Service Stakeholder Forum, the Tackling Concerns Locally Death Certification Sub-group and the Child Bereavement Network and Advisory Group
- In conjunction with Help the Hospices and the Resource Information Service Cruse produced the Directory of Bereavement Services in the UK (2007)

Cruse and the media

- Cruse is often approached by journalists, documentary makers, researchers and broadcasters to comment on topical news issues related to bereavement; to advise on the impact of bereavement; to identify people wishing to talk about their personal experiences of loss and what helps them
- Cruse can provide **case studies, reports and information** relating to our work within the field of bereavement and has a range of specialists available for comments, advice and interviews (see Appendix 1). Cruse will also help to source interviews with local branch representatives, where appropriate
- Our recent press releases can be found on www.cruse.org.uk, as can further information about the charity and our services

Bereavement issues in modern society

Death as a taboo: death remains a subject that many people do not like to talk about. Many bereaved people report that friends, neighbours and colleagues avoid them or avoid mentioning the death for fear of making matters worse. As a result some bereaved people can feel further isolated.

Bereavement is a health issue: the death of someone close can have a significant impact upon a bereaved person's mental, emotional and physical well being. Clinical depression, increased anxiety, poor appetite, sustained withdrawal from society and disinterest in life can all contribute to health complications.

Complicated bereavement: Although Cruse recognises that all bereavements are unique and can affect people differently, there are specific types of loss that can further increase the risk of complications such as the death of a child, death through violent crimes and through suicide.

Cruse national projects

"Every Bereaved Child Matters"

This project, established with a two year grant from the former Department for Children, Schools and Families, is increasing support services for bereaved children and young people across England. The project is developing existing, and creating new, services by increasing the number of specially trained volunteers, producing a range of resources for those supporting bereaved children and young people and raising awareness of the needs of those bereaved in childhood and adolescence.

Other projects:

Cruse has also undertaken the Bereavement Pathways Project in conjunction with the DOH and is currently working on 'Gold Standards in Bereavement Care', as well as a Prison Project in Northern Ireland. For more information on these, please contact us.