

Making Sense of Death, Dying and Bereavement: An Introduction

This anthology has been developed as a sourcebook and designed to stimulate reflection on the different ways in which death, dying and bereavement can be understood. The book is organised into seven parts, each exploring a distinct theme. Whilst each part can be read in turn, they can each be read independently, or you may wish to dip in and out of the pieces which most interest you. Most importantly, by drawing on a unique collection of personal accounts – many of which have been specially written for this volume – this anthology offers an insight into the feelings and experiences of those who are affected by death, dying and bereavement.

Part I: Visual Images of Death, Dying and Disposal offers a selection of images which represent both traditional and more contemporary representations of death and dying. For example, here you can find images of graves and post-mortem photography. Also included is a death certificate, images of roadside memorials from the United States, England and elsewhere in Europe, and examples of artwork created by hospice service users.

Visual representations of death and dying are evocative but the subject of death, dying and bereavement is also richly represented in literature. Part II: Death and Dying in Poetry, Fiction and the Media offers a selection of both newly commissioned and previously published poetry, including poetry from World War I. A selection of edited extracts from classic and contemporary literature, including children's fiction, can also be found. An obituary of Cicely Saunders is also included in this part of the book.

In Part III: Death, Dying and Bereavement on the World Wide Web, attention turns to the role of the World Wide Web and its transformative potential in the field of death, dying and bereavement. The widespread availability and accessibility of the Web has meant that it is increasingly used by those who are dying or have been bereaved, as well as by those who want to find out more about these issues. Part III focuses on the role of the Web in the provision of bereavement information, memorialisation, and as a forum for community support and communication.

Part IV: Caring for Pegile at the End of Life draws on the personal accounts of friends and family members to explore the experiences of those caring for someone who is dying. The contributions explore the rewards, challenges and regrets, as well as some of the ethical dilemmas. This part of the book also includes contributions from people who provide care at the end of life in a professional capacity. Here, you can find contributions from nurses, doctors, hospice support workers and hospital porters, amongst others.

In the next part of the book, attention turns to the feelings and experiences of those who have been bereaved, and considers the important role of professional care-givers. Part V: *When Someone Dies* includes a diversity of contributions, but the selection of pieces give consideration to expected as well as sudden and unexpected deaths.

The experiences of people who survive or who have been bereaved following traumatic death, mass death and disaster are unique, and so Part VI: Reflecting on Traumatic Death, Mass

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Death and Disaster focuses specifically on these. This part of the book includes contributions from a forensic ecologist and a crisis management consultant, as well as the account of someone charged with the responsibility for returning personal property following mass death and disaster. Whilst recognising that the experiences of people who survive disasters are diverse, Part VI draws on personal accounts of those affected by (amongst others) the disaster at the football stadium in Hillsborough, the Asian Tsunami, and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York.

The final part of this book focuses on a much debated and disputed question: what happens after death? In Part VII: Making Sense of the After-life and Life After Death, personal accounts of apparitions and the stories of those who seek to communicate with those who have died are presented. These contributions offer different ways of making sense of the after-life and of the experiences of those who are bereaved. Part VII also explores life after death and ways of commemorating and memorialising the lives of people who have died.