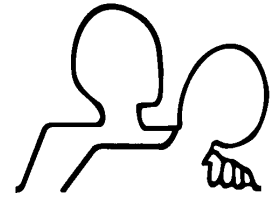


NALAG NEWS



The Newsletter for the National Association for Loss and Grief
Te Ropu Mirimiri Aitua mo Aotearoa

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FEBRUARY 2012


News from the president.

Challenges, hope and “relearning the world”

In the new year greetings exchanged among friends and colleagues during the past month, a common theme that I’ve noticed has been how challenging 2011 has been for many people, and how everyone has been looking forward with hope to new beginnings in 2012. A recent television programme on worldwide natural disasters reminded us of the number of such major events—including the Canterbury earthquakes—that have devastated various places and the lives of those who lived there during the past year. At the AGM in November, Herman Meijburg had provided us with a very thought provoking and poignant personal insight into the complex reality of life in the earthquake zone. Then cruelly, Christmas was overshadowed for Canterbury folk by the effects of yet another major earthquake and ongoing shocks. The devastation of more homes, public buildings, lives and hopes was an unbelievable, and for some an overwhelming setback, at the very time when things seemed to be calming down, and people were looking in anticipation to a more settled future

And now, as we hear of the worsening international economic crisis and feel the increasing effects of the economic downturn, we read of a survey revealing that since the euphoria of the World Cup just months ago, the mood of New Zealanders has become more pessimistic than at any time in the last few years. While it is clearly worse for those immediately affected by catastrophic events, and there has been a nationwide outpouring of compassion and concern for Canterbury in particular, these trends and events also create a pervasive and unsettling sense of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear for the future affecting whole communities. The flow-on effects of the constrained economy may be less visible and less public but are also complex and damaging.

Resonating through all of this are change, loss and grief. Although many lives were lost in Canterbury, and daily we seem to hear of people being lost on the roads and in the water this summer, the change, loss and grief I’m particularly thinking of affects vast numbers of



people and involves the non-mortal losses not related to death but to the loss of one's home, neighbourhood, social network, special places, job, identity, financial security, plans and dreams for the future, sense of order, sense of control over one's destiny . . . the world as one knows it, and therefore who "I" am and what "my" future is in my world. In Tom Attig's words, the challenge of "relearning the world" is a very real and immediate one for many in the global community and in Aotearoa New Zealand at this time.

More than ever there is a need for effective support for those coping with change, loss and grief in our communities. And while we all work in our own roles and communities to educate people about loss and grief, provide support for those who grieve, help them to find hope again and make a difference, the challenge we have been addressing in our own organisation is our own future as NALAG in this environment: the question of whether or not we may be sustainable and able to position ourselves moving forward, as an organisation that is not set up to operate on the front line but to provide networking and support for those who do. We too are challenged by needing to "relearn" our world and explore whether there is a practicable way of continuing as an organisation, as a number of us would wish to do.

Good news from the AGM is that the proposal put forward by Hanny Naus and Carol Dean to develop our umbrella role to encourage the support, knowledge and understanding of loss and grief in our communities was strongly supported at the AGM in November. The associated proposal was also endorsed: *"That NALAG NZ Executive contracts a project manager for a time limited period to liaise with potential networks and report back within 6 months for the Executive to determine the sustainability of NALAG NZ, including utilising web based services."*

A project manager has now been contracted to undertake the first phase of the project, and within two months we should be able to tell whether developing along the proposed lines will be sustainable or not. We are very hopeful, and will keep you all posted.

Meanwhile there is information here about timely resources from Skylight, and the Death Downunder Conference in Dunedin in late June.

As always, we ask you to keep in touch with us about what's happening in your area: news of what you are doing, events you are planning/ wanting to advertise, loss and grief-related groups you are starting, etc. And please also alert us to particular needs related to loss and grief resourcing in your areas. You may like to write about an experience of your own or others, that would be of interest to others and which we could include in the next NALAG News. How would you like us to support you in the work you do?

Wishing all of us well in the year ahead,

Margaret Agee

PROPOSAL FOR NALAG (NZ) 2011 A.G.M.



PROPOSAL FOR ...FEASIBILITY PROJECT = PART ONE

“NALAG NZ investigates the feasibility of sustaining the organisation, with particular reference to developing the website to become an information exchange for training, education, counselling and support opportunities throughout NZ.”

To develop the NALAG website as an information exchange to...

- a) LIST connected organisations
- b) PROMOTE counselling services
- c) ADVERTISE training opportunities
- d) UPDATE resource information

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| a) LIST connected organisations | Enlist organisations with a direct connection to loss and grief As members they could utilise the website to explain their services with links to access them |
| b) PROMOTE counselling services | Counsellors working with loss and grief who want to advertise their services would be listed in geographical areas of the country |
| c) ADVERTISE training opportunities | Promotion of Education and Training courses, seminars, conferences on loss and grief by any members/organisations. Fee structures to include member benefits |
| d) UPDATE resource information | Continuous updating of resources, support and opportunities to keep information current e.g. calendar of training options |

PROPOSAL FOR ...FEASIBILITY PROJECT = PART TWO

“That NALAG NZ Executive contracts a project manager for a time limited period to liaise with potential networks and report back within 6 months for the Executive to determine the sustainability of NALAG NZ, including utilising web based services.”

Project Manager's Tasks

- ✦ Canvas organisations & individuals
 - ✦ Outline website proposal
 - ✦ Negotiate membership benefits
- Develop guidelines for practical administration requirements

Project Manager's Role

- ✦ Guidance from Exec Subcommittee
- ✦ Maximum 6 months contract
- ✦ Report monthly -> Review 3 monthly

Advise on feasibility & sustainability

NALAG Executive's Responsibilities:

Oversight of Feasibility Project

Advise membership about sustainability of NALAG NZ following outcome of Feasibility Project

Payment of Contractor and oversee budget

This project will entail a review of our current membership structure which is likely to involve a realignment of membership categories and fees.

CONCLUDING REVIEW OF HOW AN 'INFORMATION EXCHANGE WEBSITE' WOULD FULFIL OUR EXISTING NALAG AIMS?

To **encourage** and **promote** professional and community **education** in the areas of **loss and grief**.

To **encourage** direct **assistance** in the form of individual **counselling** and **group support** to those suffering the effects of loss and grief.

To **encourage** investigation, **study**, and research into the human experience of loss and grief.

To coordinate grief-related activities at a local level.

To **liaise** between **related** national and local **organisations**.

Top five regrets of the dying

Photo / Thinkstock

8:28 AM Friday Feb 3, 2012

When you're close to kicking the bucket it's not skydiving, more crazy love making or hiking Everest that you're going to wish you did. Not according to Australian palliative nurse, Bronnie Ware.

Ware counsels people in their dying days and says the most common regret she hears from her patients is wishing they hadn't worked so hard, especially from the men.



She chats with people in their last three to 12 weeks alive, and began recording their reflections in a blog called *Inspiration and Chai*. The site received so much attention that she put her observations into a book called *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying*.

"People grow a lot when they are faced with their own mortality," she writes on the blog.

"I learnt never to underestimate someone's capacity for growth. Some changes were phenomenal. Each experienced a variety of emotions, as expected, denial, fear, anger, remorse, more denial and eventually acceptance."

"When questioned about any regrets they had or anything they would do differently, common themes surfaced again and again. Here are the most common five."

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.

"This was the most common regret of all. When people realise that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people had not honoured even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made."

2. I wish I didn't work so hard.

"This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. Women also spoke of this regret. But as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence."

3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.

"Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and never became who they were truly capable of becoming. Many developed illnesses relating to the bitterness and resentment they carried as a result."

4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.

"Often they would not truly realise the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks and it was not always possible to track them down. Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years. There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort that they deserved. Everyone misses their friends when they are dying."

5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

"This is a surprisingly common one. Many did not realise until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and habits. The so-called 'comfort' of familiarity overflowed into their emotions, as well as their physical lives. Fear of change had them pretending to others, and to their selves, that they were content. When deep within, they longed to laugh properly and have silliness in their life again."

- HERALD ONLINE

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=10782975 (accessed February 3, 2012)



The [University of Otago](#), Dunedin, in association with the [University of Canterbury](#), and the [University of Sydney](#), is pleased to announce that the second Death Down Under conference for Death Studies will take place on the 28 and 29 of June 2012 at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

This conference aims to promote the dissemination of social aspects of death studies research in Australia, New Zealand, and the wider Pacific region.

Rationale

Continuing the momentum of the first conference, DDU 2012 will showcase the research being undertaken in the areas of death, dying and bereavement throughout Australia and New Zealand. It is the aim of the DDU 2012 conference to facilitate and consolidate a cohesive Death Studies network in Australia, New Zealand and beyond. This two-day conference will provide a forum for academics, practitioners and professionals to share their research and experience, and to develop networks that can lead to collaborative research endeavours. As such, this conference aims to be invigorating and dynamic, and will include keynote speakers, parallel paper sessions and social events.

As in the previous year, topics for the parallel sessions are open and we seek a broad base of participants. Following feedback from DDU2011, the conference organisers particularly encourage papers on the following topics as they relate to Death Studies: Indigeneity, inequality, museum studies, and funeral directing.

Key Dates

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Deadline for abstracts | 31 January 2012 |
| Early registration | 1 December 2011 - 31 March 2012 |
| General registration | 1 April 2012 - 28th June 2012 |
| DDU conference | 28 June 2012 - 29 June 2012 |

Contact us at: info.ddu@gmail.com

Note: The date for papers has been extended.



“After the one we love has gone. Holding on or letting go?”

Presented by Andrew Thompson

This workshop will offer a discussion about the influential voices over the last 100 years and what they have told us about grief. It will provide an opportunity to explore our own thinking and ideas about grief, and the dilemma of holding on and letting go.

The workshop will be particularly suitable for those whose work brings them in touch with people experiencing grief and loss, yet have had little opportunity for any training in this area—or feel in need of a refresher! Ideal for those working in the health field; older people’s care; social workers; support and field workers; funeral directors; celebrants.

Date: Thursday 22 March, 2012

Time: 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.

Venue: The Grief Centre, 92 Hinemoa St, Birkenhead

Cost: \$20.00

Afternoon tea provided. Plenty of street parking is available. A map of how to find us can be found on our website

Andrew Thompson is a Professional Teaching Fellow at the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at Auckland University, and a Social Worker and Therapist with the Consult Liaison Psychiatry Team at Starship Children’s Hospital. His work involves consulting with children, their families and staff across the hospital on issues relating to trauma adjustment, coping and adapting to treatment, and grief. He was a founding member of the Paediatric Palliative Care Team and the Bereavement Service at Starship and continues to act as an educator and trainer in these fields. Andrew is a Trustee of The Grief Centre and we are very pleased to welcome him here for this workshop. For more information on Andrew’s research interests and publications, please visit the Auckland University website.



Registration: To register for this workshop, please phone The Grief Centre on 09 4181457, or email office@griefcentre.org.nz with your name, contact details, and your area of work.

Kids Do Grieve

Presented by Lorna Wood



Using a clinical case study, you will have the opportunity to explore the concepts required for children to gain an understanding about death and dying. We will also look at the different developmental needs specific to the age of a child who may be grieving. There will be opportunity for questions and discussion.

The workshop will be particularly suitable for those whose work brings them in touch with children experiencing grief and loss, and /or their parents and carers. Counsellors, social workers, health workers, support workers, teachers, and volunteers may all find this useful for their work.

Date: Thursday 3 May, 2012

Time: 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.

Venue: The Grief Centre, 92 Hinemoa St, Birkenhead

Cost: \$20.00

Afternoon tea provided. Plenty of street parking is available. A map of how to find us can be found on our website

Lorna Wood is a Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist. She divides her time between her private clinical work, and her roles in the Paediatric Palliative Care Team and working as Bereavement Coordinator for Starship Children's Health.

Registration: To register for this workshop, please phone The Grief Centre on 09 4181457, or email office@griefcentre.org.nz with your name, contact details, and your area of work.

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