Support Services for Grieving
or Bereaved Children: Needs Assessment

Helplines, Online Support, Social Media, etc.

Supplement to Literature Search

Helplines are commonplace. Many government and non-government organizations provide them in the context of family and children's services. There appears to be only a handful of helplines, however, offering grief counselling or bereavement support; the majority are by far "family focussed." Few are specific to the needs of bereaved children and young people. Likewise, there is much published in the literature on the effectiveness or value of helplines, but little in comparison that is specific to bereaved children and young people. Social media have long offered platforms for expressions of loss and separation, particularly among young people. Developments in technology, however, make it difficult to keep pace with user preferences.

Contents

Helplines for Children & Young People in General – beginning p.3

A selection of articles (listed in descending order of publication) on helplines in general – awareness of online resources such as helplines, user motivations, caller and call takers perceptions, interactional strategies, call taker listening skills, etc., etc. A literature review of helplines is included. Links to abstracts of the articles and, where available, to the full text are noted.

Some studies have been of specific websites and links to these are to be found under 'Appendices,' i.e., 'Websites,' for example, Kids Help Line (Australia), Childline (U.K.) and Childline (Ireland).

Child Impact Assessment Manual: Assessing your child helpline's impact on children is the result of an international initiative – p.7 (contents page right). The authors acknowledge that "there is a lot of literature and on-line resources about monitoring and evaluation techniques in general, and about project impact assessments specifically. The manual aims to single out a number of methods and practices particularly suitable for the work of child helplines." The year of publication is not stated, but 2010 statistics are quoted in the text.

Online Support & Social Media in the Context of Grief, Bereavement, Mourning – beginning p.8

This section includes a selection of articles (listed in descending order of publication) on online support and social media in the context of of meeting the needs of bereaved children and young people, and from a variety of different perspectives. Links to abstracts of the articles and, where available, to the full text are noted.

_____

Appendices

Website Design – p.11

The PhD thesis in this section is interesting for the step-by-step approach the author describes in developing a website specific to the needs of bereaved children and young people. Includes a useful 14-page list of references

Websites – beginning p.12

This section offers a representative sample of websites. Of particular interest is Hospice Peterborough's Teen Online Grief Group website. In addition to Canadian websites, websites from Australia, Ireland, the U.S., etc., are included.

PowerPoint Presentations – beginning p.24

Of general interest are several PowerPoint presentations on meeting the needs of bereaved children and young people.

Helplines for Children & Young People in General
(Representative Sample of Published Research)

Adolescents' informedness about the services provided by children's helpline

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE & EDUCATION, **2013**;4. The authors present the results of studies of informedness about the Children's Helpline and access to remote emergency psychological assistance in the case of a difficult life situation in family, school, peer group (e.g., violence, conflicts, anti-vital experiences, etc.) in students of VII-IX grades of twenty educational organizations of general (complete) education in Moscow. They discuss the reasons for reducing the likelihood of using services of the children's helpline, psychological barriers – conscious and unconscious – complicating the use of this service. The study showed that the need for psychological assistance, implemented by means of remote consultation, has not been formed in the majority of students in Moscow. The authors reveal a general rule that awareness of the Children's Helpline, the perception of its effectiveness and the motivation "to call in future" and "to recommend others to call," are closely interrelated among respondents with experience of such calls.

Abstract of journal article:
http://psyjournals.ru/en/psyedu_ej/2013/n4/65873.shtml

Children's concerns about their parents' health and well-being: Researching with ChildLine Scotland

CHILDREN & SOCIETY, **2012**;26(5):381-393. This paper reports on research conducted with Childline Scotland, a free, confidential, telephone counselling service, using their database. The authors focussed on children's calls about parental health and well-being and how this affected their own lives. Children's concerns emerged within multi-layered calls in which they discussed multiple issues and problems in their lives such as alcohol misuse, drug misuse, domestic violence, family relationships, depression, mental health problems and bereavement. They discuss how children were making sense of these experiences; how they were trying to get by in difficult family circumstances; whose help they valued; and, conclude with implications for policy and practice.

Abstract of journal article:
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2010.00349.x/abstract?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false

Literature review on help-lines for children and parents

COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY & PSYCHOTHERAPY, **2011**;2:70-90. The article contains an analytic review of foreign literature on helplines for children and parents, and covers some historical issues as theoretical and methodological ones. Helpline is regarded within the social and cultural context of practices of compassion and self-regulation in society.

Abstract of journal article:
http://psyjournals.ru/en/mpj/2011/n2/57475.shtml

N.B. Russian language article ...but, a list of 63 references is in English.

Children's experiences with chat support and telephone support

JOURNAL OF CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & PSYCHIATRY, **2009**;50(6):759-766. Many counseling and refer-ral services for children have introduced online chat, often in addition to a traditional telephone service. A study was conducted between the telephone service and the confidential one-on-one online chat service of the Dutch Kindertelefoon. Children experienced a higher sense of well-being and a reduced severity of their problems after consulting the Kindertelefoon. Results were slightly more favorable for the chat ser-vice than for the telephone service. Many who contact the Kindertelefoon suffer from relatively severe emotional problems. Both the telephone and the web-based support improved the children's well-being and decreased their perceived burden of problem. This study underlines the need for closer cooperation between child helplines and mental health and child welfare services.

Abstract of journal article:
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.02024.x/abstract?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false

N.B. Scroll down to 'Preview Article.' See also 'Kindertelefoon: Case Study': http://www.kana.com/small-medium-business/casestudy/kana-express-the-kindertelefoon-case-study-en-us.pdf

**Who's the friend in the background? Interactional strategies
in determining authenticity in calls to a national children's helpline**

AUSTRALIAN REVIEW OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, **2007**;30(3). A significant number of calls made to Kids Help Line are seen by the organisation as not requiring counselling support, but are rather young people testing or "checking out" the service. Although the status of many of these "testing calls" is self-evident, determining the authenticity of others presents the helpline counsellors with a dilemma: confront-ing the caller if they have doubts about the caller's reason for calling while, at the same time, avoiding a premature challenge when the call is genuine. The authors examine the various interactional strategies that the counsellors artfully deploy in their determination of the status of a call. Outright challenges are rare, and counsellors typically will employ devices that announce their suspicions indirectly and which, at the same time, seamlessly accomplish the mundane business of responding to a call in ways which treat the callers with respect.

Full text of journal article:
http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/aral/article/viewFile/1966/2348

Troubles announcements and reasons for calling: Initial actions in opening sequences in calls to a national children's helpline

Calls to emergency assistance providers, and helplines more generally, have typically been analyzed from the assumption that for both caller and call taker, the primary orientation is the reason for the call. For the caller, this is one of seeking, and for the call taker, that of attempting to provide some specified help, assistance, or advice. In this article, the authors draw on the opening sequences on calls to Kids Help Line, a national Australian helpline and counseling service for children and young persons aged between 5 and 18, to show this assumption as problematic for this service. The helpline operates from a child-centered organizational philosophy, we care, we listen, rather than we can solve your problems. Unlike many helplines in which an explicit offer of help is made in the call taker's opening turn, the Kids Help Line counselors provide only an organizational identification. The consequence of this design is that the onus is placed on the caller to account for the call, a process that typically involves the announcement or description of a trouble or problem and then, delivered separately, a specific reason for the call. The authors identify one construction in which the caller formulates their reason for the call with a claim to the effect that they do not to know what to do. Utterances such as this work, the authors argue, as sequence closing devices, a method by which the caller demonstrates the trouble has been adequately described and that they are now ready for counseling advice.

Full text of journal article:
http://eprints.qut.edu.au/14753/1/14753.pdf

The assessment of active listening skills in helpline volunteers

This research attempted to determine if the active listening skills of helpline volunteers are improved through training and maintained after training and if the assessment tool currently used by helplines to objectively measure active listening skills. The lack of significant correlations between Crisis Center Discrimination Index (CCDI) scores and supervisor ratings of active listening skills does not support the CCDIs validity. When the CCDI was altered so that the volunteers ranked responses to a caller instead of rated them, moderate correlations between CCDI scores and supervisor ratings resulted. In this form, scores on the CCDI improved with training. This indicates that active listening skills improve with training. Although scores on the CCDI did not change significantly from immediately after training to a follow-up period, supervisor ratings of active listening skills increased significantly, indicating that active listening skills improve with experience on helplines.

Abstract of journal article:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15434610490281075

The impact of children's helplines: An international comparison

PRACTICE: SOCIAL WORK IN ACTION, **1992**;6(4):299-306. The objective of the research is to compare the impact of children's helplines in the U.K., the Irish Republic and The Netherlands, both in terms of the numbers of children calling, and the problems about which they call. The criteria used for the comparison include total child population, numbers of children calling, sex and age of children calling, problems about which they call, numbers of "testing" calls, and the outcomes of calls, where these are known. Where available, prevalence studies of physical or sexual abuse are also compared. The figures show that the numbers of children who call far exceed those who come to the attention of social work agencies and are beginning to represent a significant percentage of the child population as a whole. With one exception, girls outnumber boys. The kinds of problems about which the children call vary greatly, and the paper addresses the reasons for this. The implications of these differences are discussed. The paper analyses the helplines' published statistics together with national population statistics and available prevalence studies, and discussions with staff on the implications of the differences as they became apparent. It is recommended that intervention systems should give children as much control as possible.

N.B. The helplines studied: Kindertelefoon (The Netherlands); Childline (U.K.); and, Childline (Ireland).

Full text of journal article:
http://docs.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/fulltext/0009871.pdf

Child Impact Assessment Manual

Assessing your child helpline's impact on children

CHI Child Helpline International

OAK FOUNDATION

http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/media/41265/chi_child_impact_assessment_manual.pdf

Online Support & Social Media in
the Context of Grief, Bereavement, Mourning
(Representative Sample of Published Research)

Online grief support communities: Therapeutic benefits of membership

OMEGA – JOURNAL OF DEATH & DYING | Online – 6 March 2015 – Online grief support communities have become popular in recent years for those seeking information and empathetic others following the death of someone close to them. Hundreds of Facebook pages and Web sites are now devoted to bereavement – and health-care professionals need to assess what therapeutic benefits virtual communities might offer to help people manage grief and integrate death into their lives. In the current study... individuals report less psychological distress as a result of joining these groups – and this psychosocial benefit increased over time. Individuals who were members for a year or more characterized their grief as less severe compared with those who had a shorter tenure in the community. Additional findings and implications are discussed.

Full text of journal article:
http://ome.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/03/06/0030222815575698.full.pdf+html

**Public relations for the bereaved: Online interactions
in a community for stillbirth and neonatal death charity**

PUBLIC RELATIONS REVIEW | Online – 4 December **2014** – This paper uses the case of the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS) in the U.K. and assesses its use of social media. The results reveal that SANDS engages in one-way communication and fails to take full advantage of the potential of the Web 2.0 to increase awareness, raise funds, and break the taboo around stillbirth and neonatal death. The results can be used to improve SANDS' online communication and can be applied by similar nonprofits in the U.K.

Abstract of journal article:
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0363811114001878

Death on Facebook: Examining the roles of social media communication for the bereaved

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL & PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS | Online – 21 October **2014** – This study examines the ways in which Facebook was helpful and unhelpful to participants when someone they knew died. Analysis of 454 thought units revealed three themes describing participants' experiences with communication on Facebook during bereavement: news dissemination, preservation, and community. The results suggest that Facebook communication is both beneficial and challenging for bereaved users, which may produce a coping paradox. Implications of grief-related mediated communication and the coping paradox are explored.

Abstract of journal article:
http://spr.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/10/21/0265407514555272.abstract

Grief and the Internet: Insights for family and summer sciences professionals

JOURNAL OF FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES, **2014**;106(3):41-47. Working with individuals dealing with death and loss can be particularly challenging for family and consumer sciences (FCS) professionals, but what is unknown is how FCS practitioners can utilize social media to understand and assist in the mourning process. The purpose of this study was to gather information about grieving via online social networking sites, taking into consideration different types of grief and loss (i.e., complicated grief, anticipatory grief, and ambiguous loss). Data were collected from 44 in memoriam profile webpages on MySpace and Facebook social media accounts. Findings show a variation in how the general public utilizes social media by the form of grief/loss experienced. Half of the responses were classified as anticipatory grief (53%; knew person was terminally ill), over one third were ambiguous in nature (33%; no finality), and 14% were classified as complicated grief (prolonged grieving). Recommendations for research are provided.

Abstract of journal article:
http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/aafcs/jfcs/2014/00000106/00000003/art00009

Virtual mourning and memory construction on Facebook: Here are the terms of use

BULLETIN OF SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY SOCIETY | Online – Accessed 5 March **2014** – This article investigates the online information practices of persons grieving and mourning via Facebook. It examines how, or whether, these practices and Facebook's terms of use policies have implications for the bereaved and/or the memory of the deceased. To explore these questions, the authors compared traditional publicly recorded asynchronous modes of grieving (i.e., obituaries) with Facebook's asynchronous features (i.e., pages, photos, messages, profiles, comments). Additionally, by applying observational techniques to Facebook memorial pages and Facebook profiles, conducting a survey, and interviewing respondents as a follow-up to the survey, we examined the benefits of and issues surrounding online information sharing via Facebook when coping with the loss of another. The authors found that the immediacy of publishing comments, messages, wall posts, and photos provides Facebook mourners with a quick outlet for their emotions and a means of timely group support; however, these actions directly affect the online curation of the deceased's self and memory and also create an environment of competition among mourners.

Full text of journal article:
https://www.asis.org/asist2013/proceedings/submissions/papers/115paper.pdf

Does the Internet change how we die and mourn?

OMEGA – JOURNAL OF DEATH & DYING, **2012**;64(4):275-302. The article outlines the issues that the internet presents to death studies. Part 1 describes a range of online practices that may affect dying, the funeral, grief and memorialization, inheritance and archaeology; it also summarizes the kinds of research that have been done in these fields. Part 2 argues that these new online practices have implications for, and may be illuminated by, key concepts in death studies: the sequestration (or separation from everyday life) of death and dying, disenfranchisement of grief, private grief, social death, illness and grief narratives, continuing bonds with the dead, and the presence of the dead in society. Social network sites can bring dying and grieving out of both the private and public realms and into the everyday life of social networks beyond the immediate family, and provide an audience for once private communications with the dead.

Full text of journal article:
http://socialdigital.dundee.ac.uk/~wmoncur/publications/Omega2011.pdf

Continuing bonds in the age of social networking: Facebook as a modern-day medium

BEREAVEMENT CARE, **2012**;31(2):62-69. As Facebook's popularity grows and endures, many profiles are becoming gravemarkers of the dead, scattered among the profiles of the living. The integration of Facebook usage into many people's everyday lives makes it unsurprising that ongoing interaction by the living with deceased persons' profiles is increasingly commonplace, but this is little studied. This research undertook qualitative document analysis of 943 posts on five "in-memory-of" Facebook groups and an interpretative phenomenological analysis of three interviews with bereaved Facebook users. Four themes arose: 1) modes of address; 2) beliefs about communications; 3) experience of continuing bonds; and, 4) nature and function of the Facebook community. The article has a threefold aim: 1) to contextualise the findings within a sociologically focused version of the continuing bonds theory of bereavement; 2) to argue that Facebook, as a modern-day "medium," may supplant more traditional "mediator death workers"; and, 3) to enhance bereavement professionals' awareness and understanding of bereavement in an age increasingly marked by technologically mediated relationships, and to thus inform clinical practice.

Abstract of journal article:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02682621.2012.710493

My space or yours: Using technology in bereavement work with adolescents

BEREAVEMENT CARE, **2010**;29(2):21-23. Electronic communication and social networking sites form an increasingly central part of young people's lives today. In bereavement work, counsellors and bereavement support workers need to adjust their approaches to the needs of adolescents, if they are successfully to engage them in the work. Incorporating online social networking sites, such as MySpace.com, in bereavement support sessions with adolescents may be helpful: in establishing trust, in providing insight into the young person's feelings and thoughts, in enabling support to be tailored to the young person's needs and in assessment of progress. This article draws on a number of case studies to illustrate its argument for the benefits of working with these new technologies, while keeping mindful of important safety concerns.

Abstract of journal article:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02682621.2010.484933

Adolescents' online social networking following the death of a peer

JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT RESEARCH, **2009**;24(1):67-90. The purpose of this study was to examine how online social networking facilitates adolescent grieving following the sudden death of a peer. Researchers reviewed 20 profiles authored by adolescents who had died between 2005 and 2007 collecting information from commentary posted to the profiles posthumously. Observed themes included adolescent Internet users directing comments to the deceased, posting memorial sentiments, indicators of coping strategies, current events and memories, comments about the act of commenting, cause of death, comments from distal or unknown peers, religious beliefs, and attending the funeral. In addition to prolonging an attachment with the deceased, online social networking also facilitates teenagers' coping in a way that grants unlimited freedom and opportunity to reflect back over their relationship with the deceased.

Abstract of journal article:
http://jar.sagepub.com/content/24/1/67.short

Appendix: Website Design

**Children's grief resources: A website for children
grieving the loss of a parent and their caregivers**

The death of a parent can represent one of the most devastating life experiences for children. It is an experience that disrupts a developmental path. It is also a crisis that families and communities must address in order to help a grieving child cope and develop resilience. Currently, there are few mental health resources available for parentally bereaved children. Literature on bereavement following the death of a parent suggests that children may experience long-term negative psychological consequences from the loss. However, the literature also notes that with appropriate support, access to resources, and opportunities to express their grief and build self-efficacy, grieving children can emerge from the loss of a parent as resilient individuals. A mental health informational website was created to help families and communities foster resilience in grieving children. The website contains information for children, parents, caregivers, and professionals. The creation of the website is discussed in addition to issues of childhood bereavement, future directions of the website, and ethical considerations.

Full text of Wright State University PhD candidate thesis:
https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/wsupsych1307712808/inline

Appendix: Websites
(Representative Sample)

Canada | Teen Online Grief Group (Peterborough, Ontario):
http://togghp.org/welcome
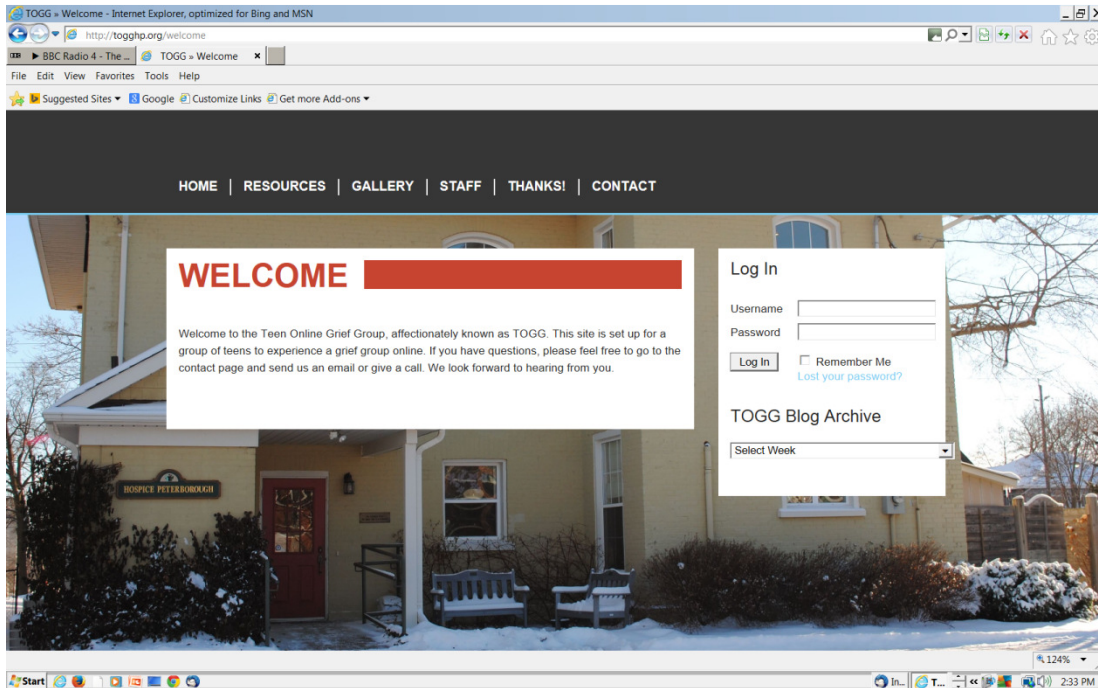
PowerPoint Presentation on TOGG
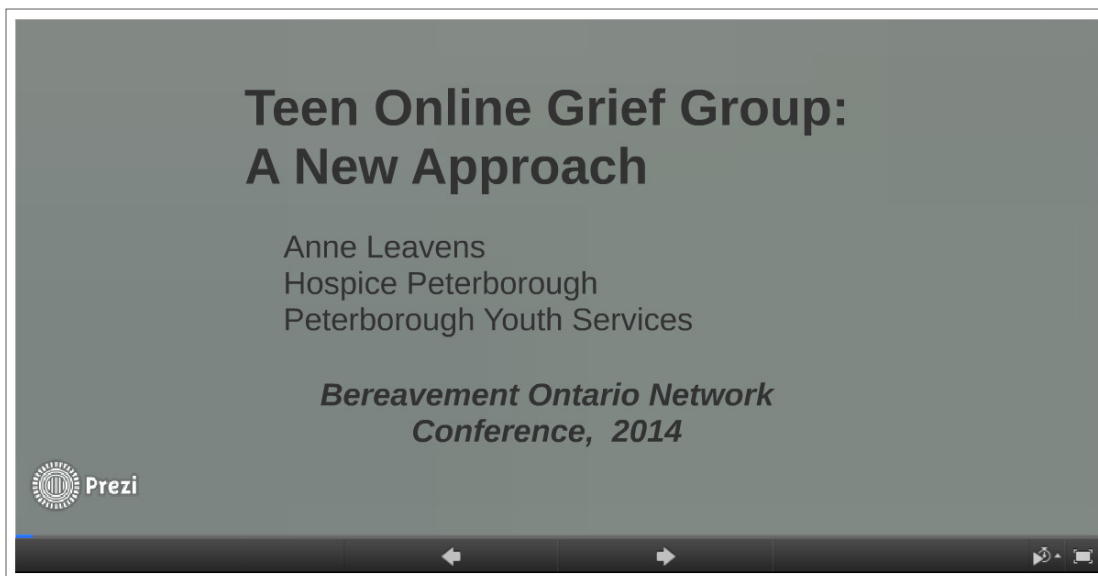
http://prezi.com/0uaa25nmzgnf/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share

Canada | British Columbia Bereavement Helpline:
http://www.bcbereavementhelpline.com/about-us/

Canada | British Columbia – Touchstones, Children's Support Group, Victoria Hospice:
http://www.victoriahospice.org/sites/default/files/touchstones-1009-proof1_2.pdf

Canada | Alberta: KidsHelpPhone:
http://org.kidshelpphone.ca/about-us/kids-need-kids-help-phone/

Canada | Quebec: Deuil Leunesse
http://www.deuil-jeunesse.com/
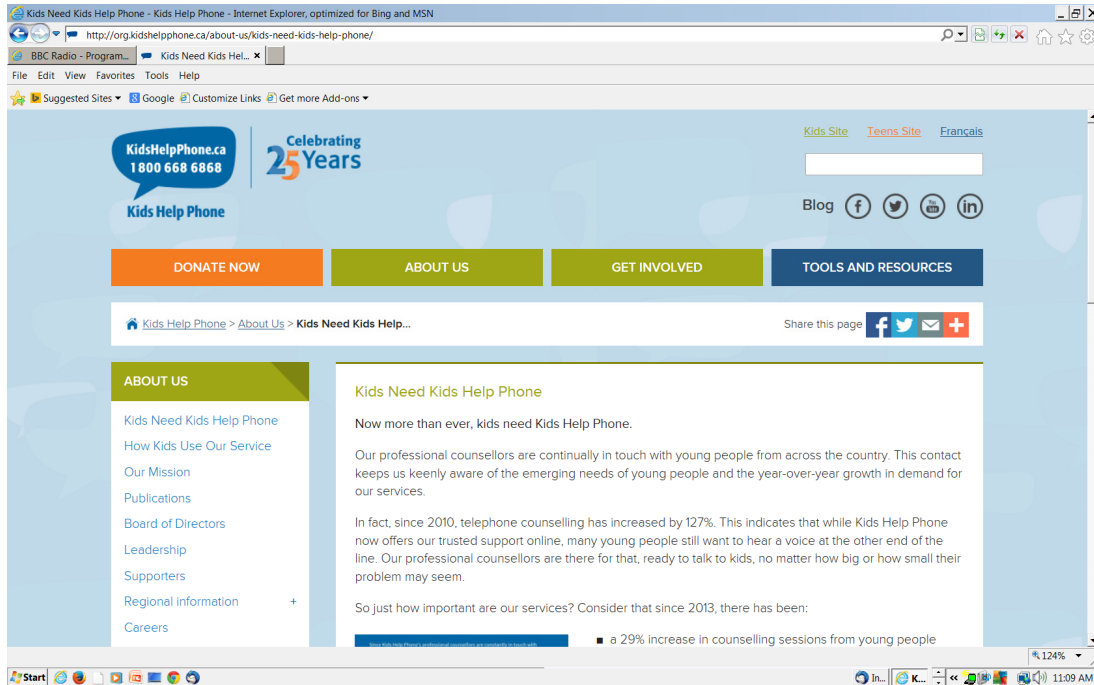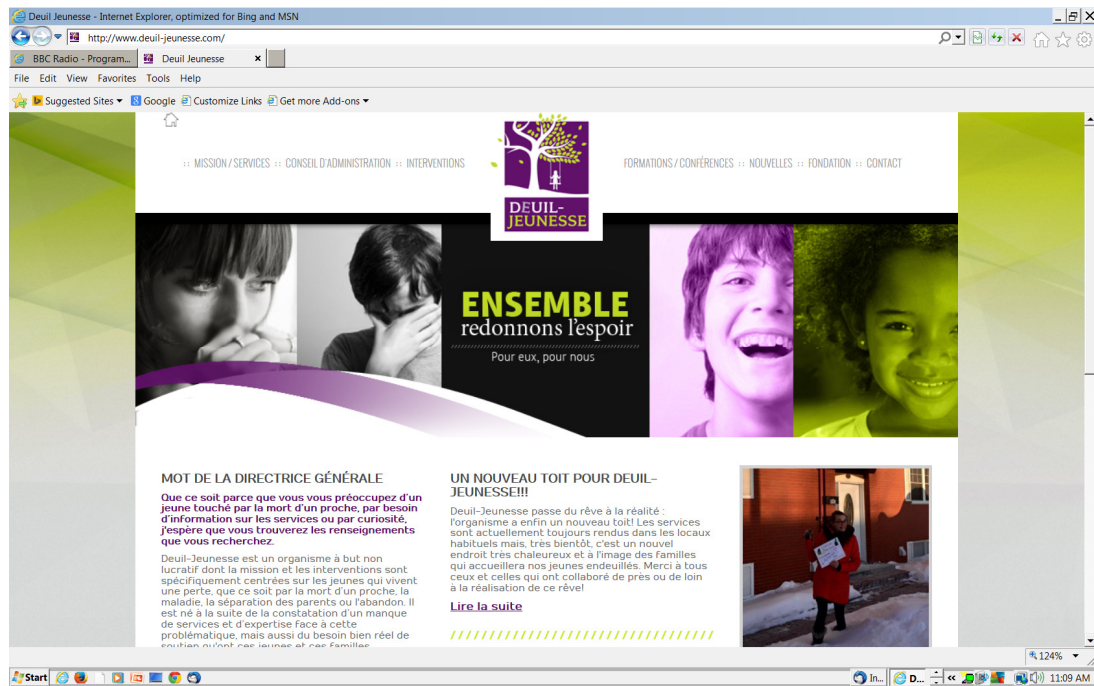
Australia | National Center for Childhood Grief:
http://www.childhoodgrief.org.au/
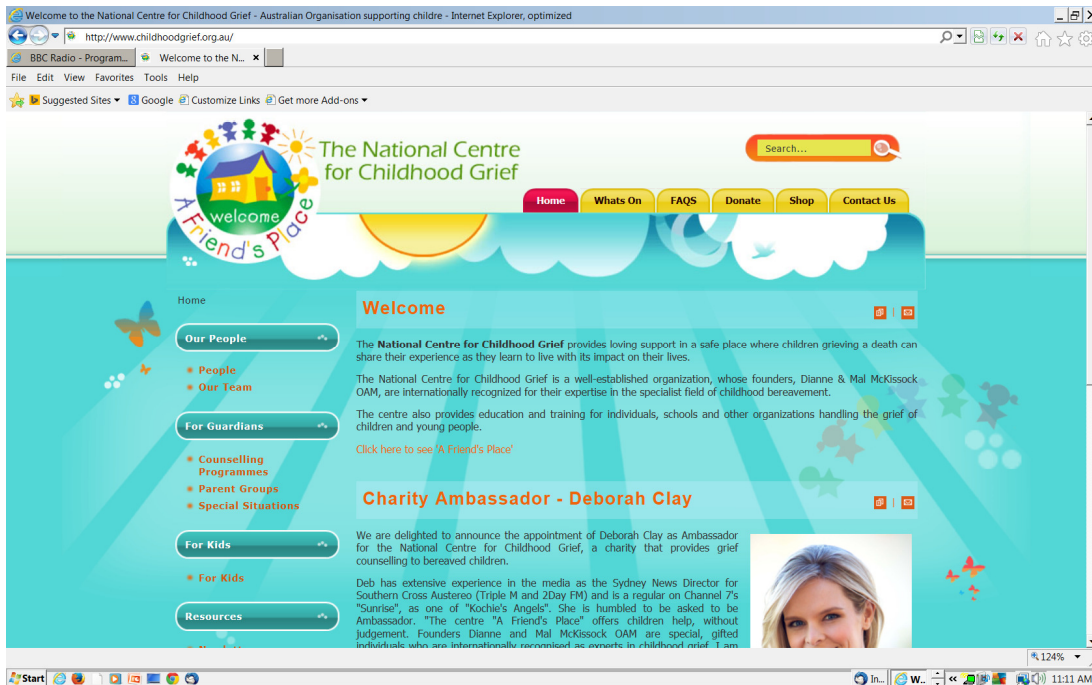
Ireland | Childline Ireland:
https://www.childline.ie/

New Zealand | Skylight
http://skylight.org.nz/

U.K. | Child Bereavement UK:
http://www.childbereavementuk.org/

U.K. | Childline:
http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/life/pages/whensomeonedies.aspx
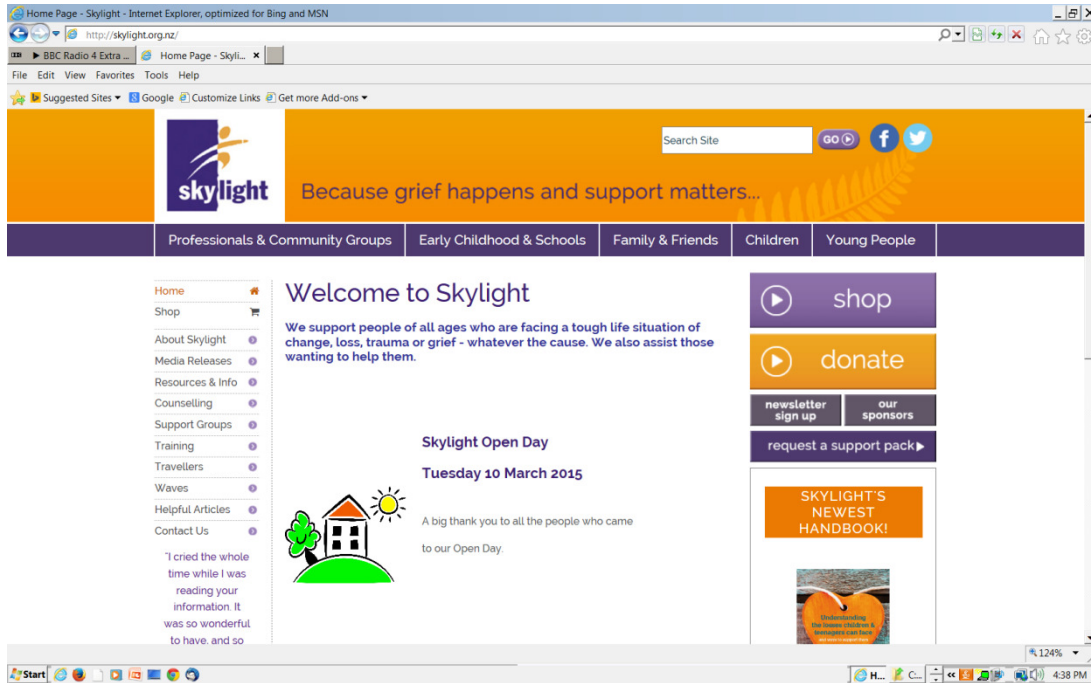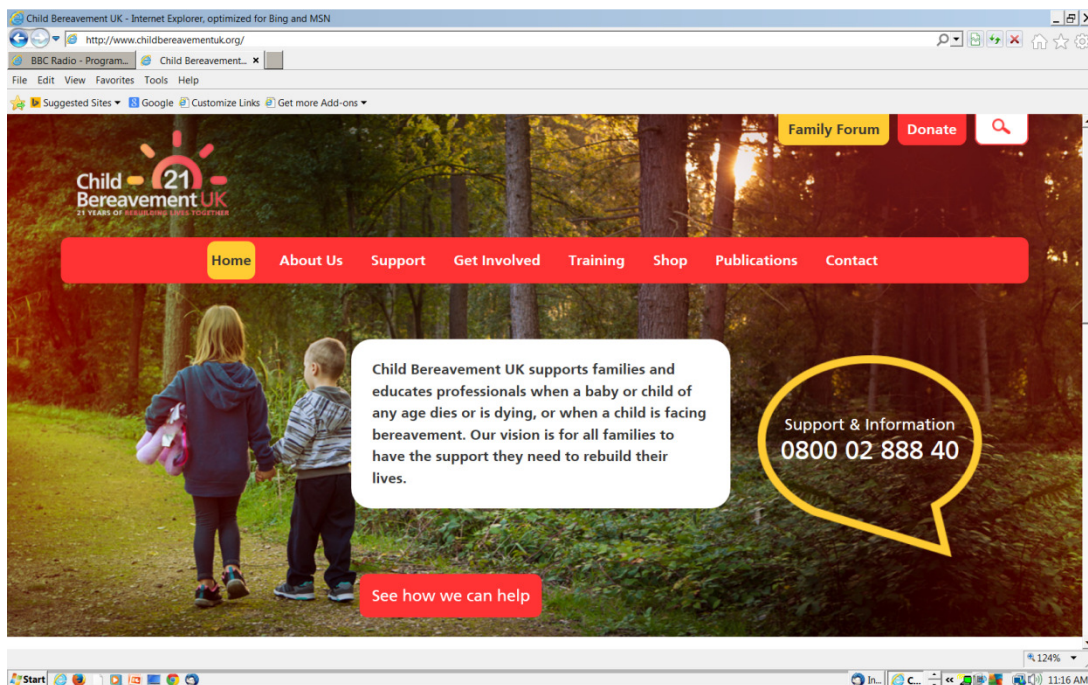
U.K. | Cruse Bereavement Care:
http://www.cruse.org.uk/home
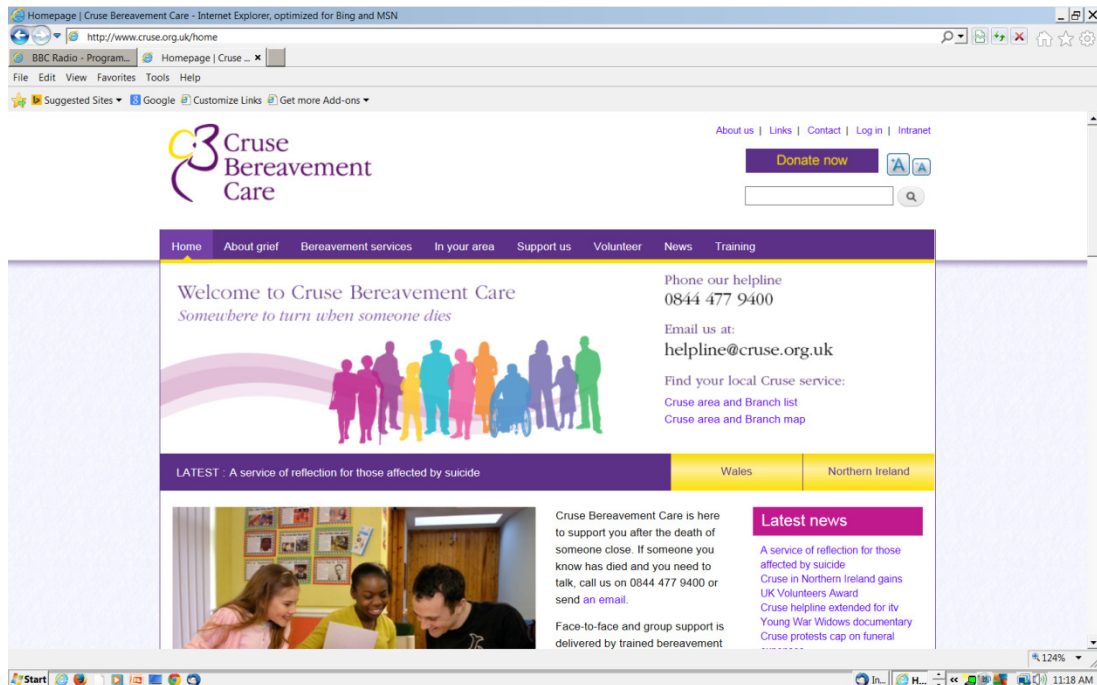
N.B. The RD4U website, at the time of this compilation, was under re-construction.

U.K. | Hope Again
http://hopeagain.org.uk/hope-again-contact-us/

U.K. | Jeremiah's Journey:
http://www.jeremiahsjourney.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/children/special-died/

U.K. | Jeremiah's Journey:
http://www.jeremiahsjourney.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/teenagers/mum-dad-ill/

U.K. | MacMillan Cancer Support:
http://learnzone.org.uk/courses/course.php?id=95

U.K. | The Notre Dame Centre:
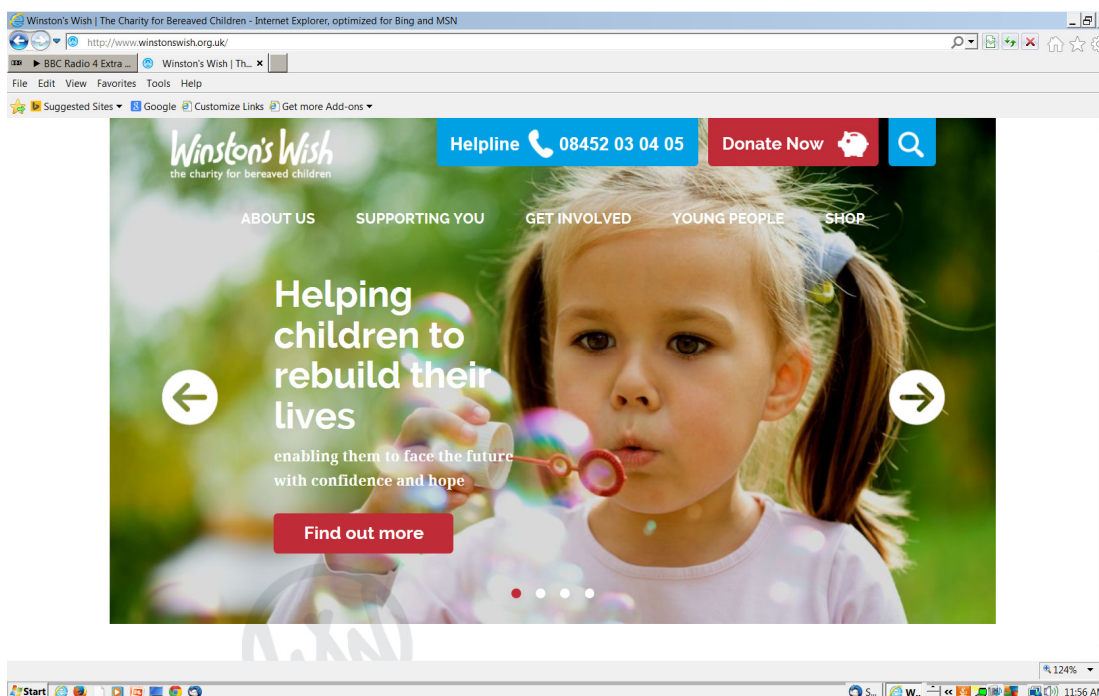http://www.notredamecentre.org.uk/home.html
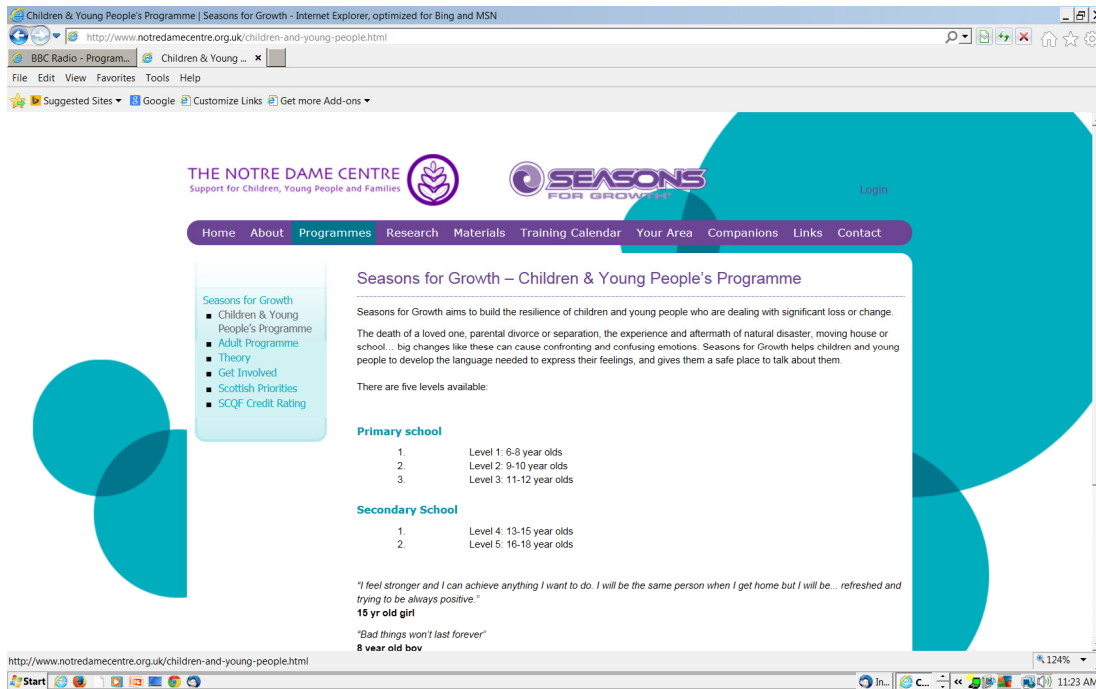
U.K. | Supporting Suddenly Bereaved Children:
http://www.suddendeath.org/help-for-professionals/supporting-suddenly-bereaved-children

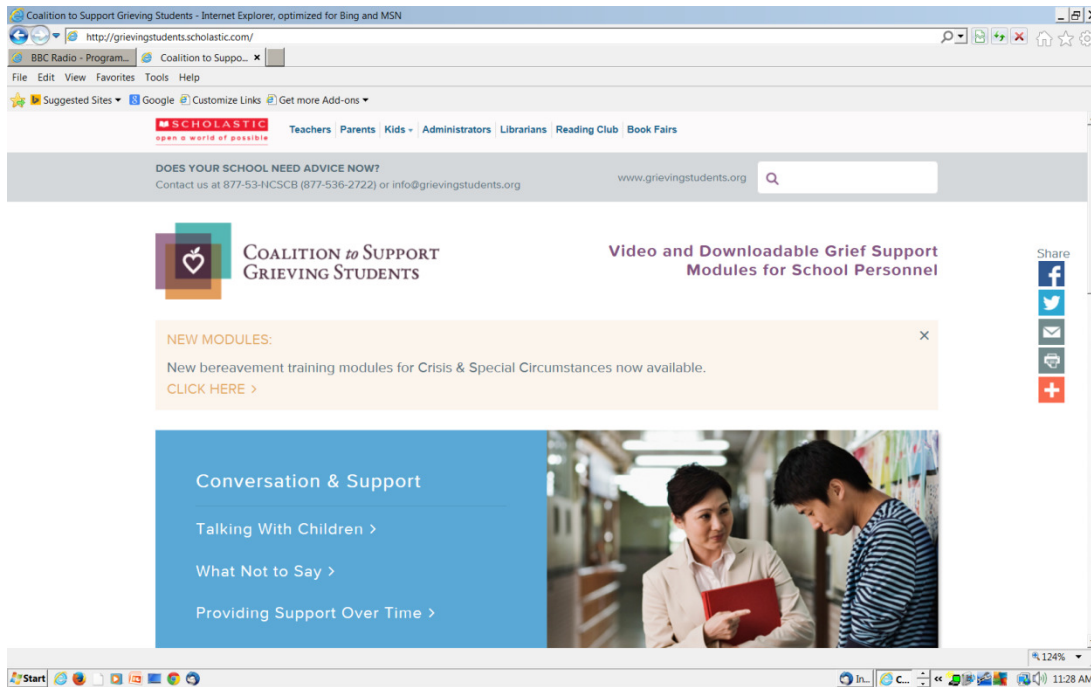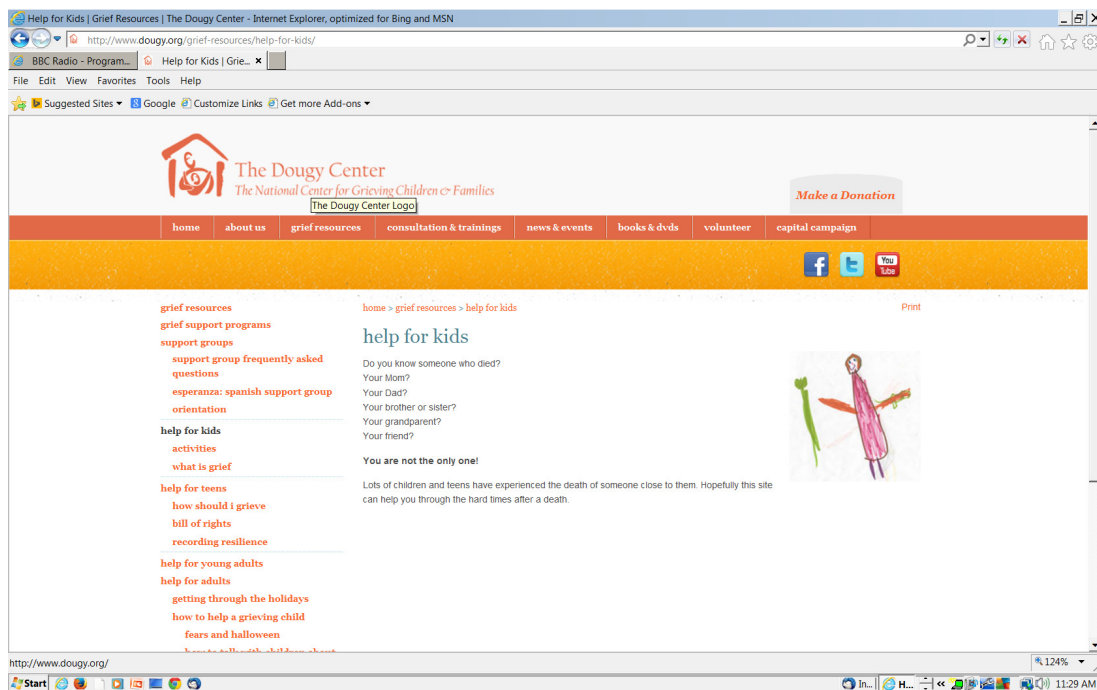U.K. | Together for Short Lives:
http://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/
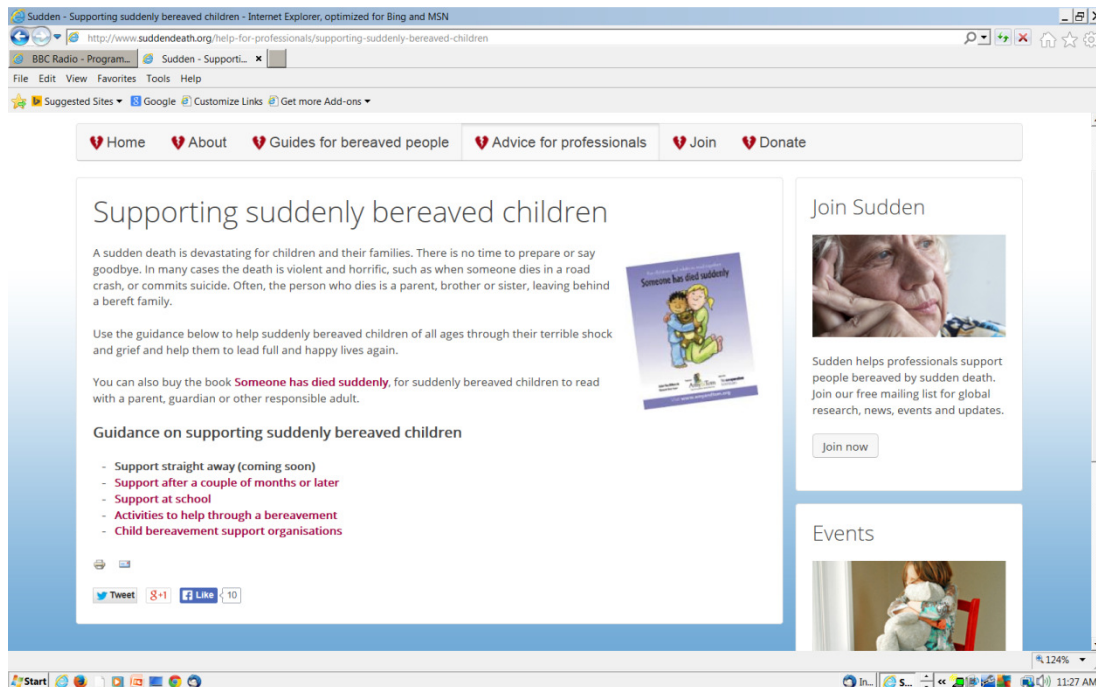
U.K. | Winston's Wishes
http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/

U.S. | Coalition to Support Grieving Students:
http://grievingstudents.scholastic.com/

U.S. | The Dougy Center (The National Center for Grieving Children & Families)
http://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/help-for-kids/

U.S. | Ele's Place: http://www.elesplace.org/

U.S. | The Rainbow Babies
http://www.therainbowbabies.com/Death.html

Appendix
PowerPoint Presentations

http://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/grief-matters-responding-loss-and-bereavement-mike-oconnor
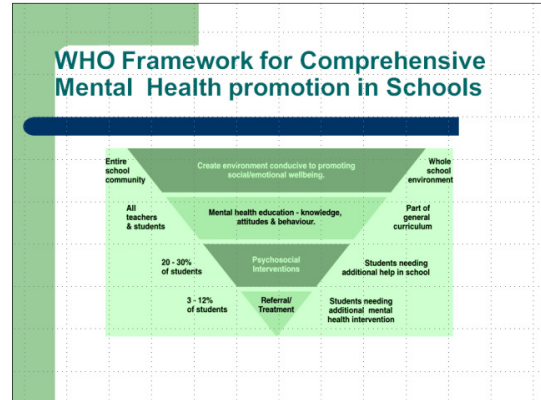
http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.corc.uk.net%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2012%2F05%2FAP-presentation-CORC-Feb-20-Compatibility-Mode.pdf&ei=norwVPbrFtWIyATTnYLABA&usg=AFQjCNFb2NW6iuOEi5rA2lvWnPCg_tr6uQ&sig2=yGOWzh7kP7w8ochszzAkJA

Children and Bereavement:
How Teachers and Schools Can Help

Presented by the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement
Director, David J Schonfeld, MD
Program Coordinator, Robin Gurwitch, PhD
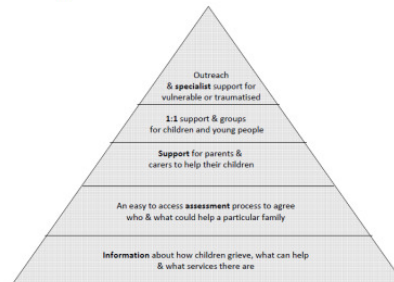www.cincinnatichildrens.org

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
School Crisis & Bereavement

Cincinnati
Children's

http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/assets/0/78/1067/4357/4389/c6d4512b-4d81-4489-994b-97f096c661a9.pdf

The burden of bereaved
children in society

Jane Fitz
Ilora Finlay

Wales Palliative Care Strategy Implementation Board

Good provision for bereaved children

Outreach
& specialist support for
vulnerable or traumatised

1:1 support & groups
for children and young people

Support for parents &
carers to help their children

An easy to access assessment process to agree
who & what could help a particular family

Information about how children grieve, what can help
& what services there are

CBN - Grief Matters for Children – a Call to Action

http://www.eapcnet.eu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=5MdRLB--lc0%3D&tabid=752