

# Teens learn to cope with death

By SHERRY KAHAN

women's resource center, 591-6400, call 430.

**HOW DOES a young person feel when a parent or loved one dies?** This question was put to them by Sandra Prochazka, a social worker who works at Associated Counseling Services of Plymouth. Together with Livonian Antoinette Albano, also a social worker, she was moderating the meeting. Hurt, afraid, annoyed, cheated, lost, overwhelmed, lonely, shocked, guilty, depressed and abandoned. These were some of the feelings mentioned.

Relief was another emotion one of these youngsters had experienced. "I was glad the pain was over," he explained. "He had a tumor."

"I couldn't believe it happened to me," reported a boy. "I cried all the time when the subject came up. I also felt cheated. Why did my dad have to die?"

"I didn't want to talk about it," said a girl.

"Why didn't I see him more?" wondered someone else.

Children have always had to face the death of a parent. But at an earlier time it was expected that both children and adults would smother the kind of feelings expressed at the meeting.

**IT'S FUNNY HOW** things change over the years," said a woman. "My father died when I was young. My mother was told to get rid of everything that reminded her of him. As a result I grew

up without hearing any mention of him. I feel that was wrong."

Another woman spoke up. "I never knew my mother grieved. She never showed it. A psychologist told me I should let my child see I was grieving."

Another participant declared: "It is still not part of society to grieve. That's why we're here. A child psychologist told me to remove all the toys my husband gave my daughter. If he wanted to talk about him, I was supposed to change the subject."

"I was told not to cry in front of her. That wouldn't happen now. Today you're supposed to express your feelings."

A man observed: "It helps children through the grieving process." "Things are better than they were 20 years ago," observed Mrs. Albano.

**GRIEF WAS WHAT** still consumed the young man whose mother had been killed.

"When I was 14 my dad remarried," he said. "I thought that was great. Her and I were good friends. But she got sick and died. It made it rough for my father. I tried not to let the situation get out of control. I did all the cleaning and laundry. Everything was going fine."

"Then came the date of her birthday. I was cooking dinner. He didn't like how I did it. It all started again to the point that we almost killed each other."

"Late February I got kicked out of the house. My dad married again. They asked me to the house. But she began telling me who to pick for friends, and to be in at 9 p.m. I rebelled against her. Right now I don't know where he's living."

Ms. Prochazka told the group: "Parents get overprotective with their kids after a death occurs. They are determined not to lose anyone else."

A woman responded. "I didn't want to keep him home from school to keep me company," she said. "I didn't like myself for doing it. I was lonely. I wanted someone to bitch at."

**THE CHANCE TO EXPRESS** themselves moved several participants to press for more meetings of this kind. The February sessions were set up in answer to this expressed need.

"Talking and listening in a group helps to overcome the loss," said a girl. "It helps you cope when you know what others are going through. I would like meetings like this to continue."

"My father died a year ago," noted another girl. "I felt depressed. I really can't talk about it at school. I break down in tears. I feel left out of discussions because I have only one parent."

"It helps to come here where everyone is in the same boat. You don't feel you're an oddball. It helps you let your feelings out and talk more. It feels better to get it off your chest, and hear the problems of someone else."

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"My mother was killed in a vicious way," said the young man in his teens. "I didn't cry for a year and a half. That's how long it took to sink in."

He was one of the participants in a session for bereaved children and parents.

The meeting was called by Schoolcraft College's women's resource center and the idea was to let young people understand it is acceptable to show feelings of grief. But the sponsors had not expected such a dramatic and painful outpouring.

The teenager explained his mother was shot when she ventured outside their home to investigate some noise.

"All I wanted to do was find the guy who did it," continued the speaker. "I wish I had walked out of the door in front instead of behind her. I felt guilty. I felt I chickened out."

"My dad took out his frustration on me. I got the crap kicked out of me. Relatives didn't want to get involved even if it meant me spending the night in the street."

The other young people in the audience had not gone through such a shocking tragedy. But their emotions at the death of their parent were as anguishing as they were varied.

And when the session was over plans were set in motion for a Schoolcraft workshop that now is scheduled to begin Tuesday, Feb. 5. The evening course will be titled "Minus a Parent; Minus a Mate," and will cost \$30 per family. Those interested may call the

## Peterson-Stevenson

Jennifer Ruth Stevenson and Bertil Richard Peterson, Jr., were married in Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold A. Stevenson, of Northville, and he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bertil R. Peterson, Sr. of Ingalls, Mich.



The bride wore a gown of ivory silk organza, trimmed with Alencon lace and seed pearls, while she carried a cascade of lilies and carnations.

She was attended by Suzanne Nabozny, Laura Nabozny, Gail Silver and Cindy Cox. They were all clad in wrap-around gowns of wine quiana, while they carried bouquets of pink carnations and eucalyptus.

Groomsmen were Dean Ehlers, Vern Menke and Daniel Berndt.

The bride is a graduate of Farmington High School, employed as a dental assistant. The groom is a graduate of Michigan State University, employed as a district manager for Oscar Mayer Company, in Los Angeles, Cal.

The couple received guests in Farmington's Holiday Inn before leaving on a wedding trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains, in North Carolina. They will make their home in Los Angeles.



## Mound-Kieling

Jeanne Kieling and Kent Mound were married in St. Andrew Episcopal Church of Livonia. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Max Kieling of Farmington and he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Mound of Farmington Hills.

The bride wore a gown trimmed in Valencia lace, fashioned with a skirt of crepe pleats, while she carried white roses. She was attended by Marie Ellen Kieling, Gwyn McIntosh, Carol Mound and Terri Dalsay.

Rick Vert served as best man with groomsmen Greg McIntosh, Greg Van Camp, John Shultz, Max Kieling and Bob Kieling.

The couple received guests at Holiday Inn before leaving on a trip to Mackinac Island. They will make their home in Livonia.

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