

# **Are you like me?: Helping Children Cope with Suicide**

By **Miki Tesh and Eric Schleich** (illustrations by **Alessio Perrone**), The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast, 2009.

Reviewed by: **Rebecca Goodney, M.S. and Julie Cerel, Ph.D.**

This booklet undertakes the difficult task of discussing suicide with children who have recently lost a loved one. Beginning by providing general definitional information regarding suicide, the text then quickly transitions to the topics of feelings children may experience in relation to suicide, questions which may remain after the death, and ways to relate to others in terms of emotions felt. The book addresses numerous common questions which children may have pertaining to these important topics.. Discussing suicide from a factual, specific, and nonjudgmental frame of reference are all positive aspects of this booklet. The text is written in an explanatory conversational style which addresses these topics by providing examples of how these experiences may have affected children in similar situations. Then, the text leads into follow-up questions on several pages to open up conversation with children. The topic is addressed in a direct manner with basic sentences which could be easily interpreted by children of all ages.

Additionally, at several points throughout the booklet a lightbulb icon is used to indicate points which could be used in order to initiate further discussion with the child. As the book is otherwise non-interactive, these discussion points are vital in order to further engage children. Furthermore, as the booklet moves quickly between topics which could each constitute in-depth discussion, these discussion points provide an opportunity to expand on the basic information in the booklet. Again, without taking advantage of these opportunities, much of the potential learning and discussion from this book could be lost.

Due to the broad, simple nature of the booklet, it seems that it could be utilized by a variety of people working with children between the ages of six to ten. Whether a counselor, family member, or another helping adult, this booklet lends itself to being a first tool to introduce children to the meaning and potentially powerful implications of suicide and begin an open discussion on the topic. As it does provide a basic overview of many areas which may need to be dealt with more thoroughly with the child in the future, it could be seen as merely a stepping stone to more involved therapeutic work when used by a counselor.

