



Paediatric Bereavement the experience of families

Introduction

The Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care (DPMPC) developed an online bereavement resource to support the delivery of education to NSW health professionals caring for families.

DPMPC invited bereaved family members to participate in the development of professionally facilitated interviews, reflecting on their experience of grief. Participants shared information that they, as experts, felt it was important for health professionals to know. This resource improved education available to health professionals to support bereaved families.

Key activities

Bereaved families can be reluctant to use support services based at the hospital because of the painful memories associated with this environment. The lack of information and education available for health professionals caring for these children and their families can increase isolation following the death of a child, which is a risk factor of complicated grief and may result in poorer outcomes in bereavement.

To address this risk, an innovative and original online resource was developed. Bereaved family members were invited to participate in professionally led filmed interviews reflecting on their experience of caring for a child with a life limiting illness and into bereavement. Written information was provided to participants outlining the purpose for the quality improvement project prior to gaining consent.

The resource has been promoted throughout paediatric tertiary hospitals and other health services that support bereaved family members. Surveys have been used to evaluate the bereavement resource.



Key achievements

The project demonstrates bereaved families can provide a unique insight for health professionals about the experience of caring for a child with a life limiting illness and the integrated role of the palliative care service.

Using a collaborative approach with families and appropriate recruitment, consent and facilitation, a valuable resource can be developed using the experience of bereaved families to educate health care professionals in bereavement work.

Evaluations have identified that 76 per cent of health professionals improved their knowledge about grief and loss after viewing the online resource. Videos have been accessed across Australia and worldwide including Iran, Ireland, Singapore, North America and Ukraine.

Acknowledgements

Fairfield RSL

