

Acute Grief and Bereavement

Breaking bad news to patients




Pamela Rodriguez BSN, RN

Judith Szerencsy BSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM

Jim Kulma, MDiv





Disclosure

- The presenters and planners of this session have no relevant financial relationship with commercial interests to disclose.
- 



Objectives

- Identify unique characteristics of the experience of perinatal loss
 - Describe three nursing interventions that support coping and reduce patient's stress
 - Identify 2 spiritual care strategies that support bereavement and make appropriate referrals to chaplains
- 






“When your parent dies, you have
lost your past.

When your spouse dies, you have
lost your present.

When your child dies, you have
lost your future.”

—Dr. Elliot Luby (NIH, 2001a)

- 
- Many times mothers are alone when the diagnosis of IUFD, or inevitable pre-viable delivery is presented to them.
 - Families don't have time to prepare for this loss emotionally or physically.
 - Listening to patients, giving them time is essential...

- 
- 
- Same information probably needs to be repeated as they have a hard time processing it, or as new family members arrive.
 - Take time to sit with the patient, just be present.

PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT CHECKLIST

Mother's Name: _____
 Age: G P L.C. Due Date
 Address: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Previous Loss: _____
 Date/Time Delivered: _____
 Date/Time of Death: _____
 Baby's Name: _____ Sex:
 Father's Name: _____
 Children's Names: _____ Age:
 _____ Age:
 _____ Age:
 Support People: _____
 Additional Information: _____

Consider using the cuddle cot especially if a burial is desired.

Religion(s): _____
 Regular OB M.D./Midwife: _____
 Attending M.D. and/or Ped: _____
 Unit: _____ Extension: _____
 Mother's Discharge Date: _____
 Cause of Death (if known): _____

Notified:		Date/Time	Initials
Mortality Service (extension 85525)			
ODH Death Report form required? Y N	If yes, Mortality Services reminded to complete		
	Email sent to Nurse Manager (for follow-up re: ODH reporting)		
Pastoral Care:	Notify Pastoral Care of death; and if patient wants to be seen. (After 5P and weekends, pager 207-7777).		
	Notify Pastoral Care of death via message on extension 84663, even if patient does not want to be seen.		

Comments: Patient/Family Response to Loss: _____

Date	Time	Interventions (M=Mother F=Father)	Comments	Initials
		Patient's room flagged with door card Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Options offered to: (Circle) M/F Seeing baby M/F Blessing M/F Baptism M/F Touch/hold baby M/F Mementos M/F Private time M/F Photos		
		Saw baby: Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Touched and/or held baby: Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Private time with baby: Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Baptism done: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Performed by: _____ If performed by a nurse, leave a message for Pastoral Care at extension 84663.		
		Blessing: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Card Given to Parents <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, performed by: _____		
		Mementos: (Circle) Given to Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing, hat, blanket, silk flower, ID bands/ On file <input type="checkbox"/> Crib cards/tape measure, lock of hair		
		Photos: **sign release form** Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (Note: Option to offer to family in sealed envelope to be opened later if not sure if they want them; Photos on file for one year only) *Reminder, if mailed USPS, patient will need to sign for photos Given to Parents <input type="checkbox"/> On File <input type="checkbox"/>	Email NM if photos need to be printed and give a copy of the photo release form	
		Footprints/handprints/weight/length (circle) (Note: can be recorded on "In Memory Of" sheet) Given to Parents <input type="checkbox"/> On File <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Option to transfer off OB unit: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Discussed grief process/incongruent grief with Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/>	Review book	
		Social Service referral: Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/>		
Initials	Signature	Initials	Signature	Initials
				Signature

Offer to mom and family

- Hold infant, spend as much time with infant as desired— cuddle cot
- Pictures
- Pastoral services, blessings, baptism
- Mementos.
 - * Hand and foot print.
 - * Measuring tape, baby bands
 - * Knitted blanket, hat, clothing
 - * Bear
 - * Blessing card, Baptism certificate, shell and napkin

Emotional feelings after loss:

- Self blame
- Guilt and shame
- Anger
- Confusion
- Grief
- Every grief is unique, because every relationship is unique.



■ Parents often feel isolated after a perinatal loss.

- * especially after first trimester loss when often friends and family members were unaware of the pregnancy.

- * they don't have the support from friends and family, as many times they are made to feel that the loss is insignificant.

- * most people feel uncomfortable talking about acknowledging fetal loss.

Avoid:

- Minimizing their loss
- Do not pretend nothing happened
- Do not rush patient's through the loss experience
- Don't say:
 - “you will have another baby when the time is right”
 - “nothing happens without a reason”
 - “it must of not meant to be”
 - “be grateful for what you have”

Advice to give to grieving parents

- ➡ Take care of yourself
- ➡ Take it slow
- ➡ Hold off on making major decisions
- ➡ Allow the mother to choose what to do with baby items
- ➡ Accept help from family and friends

Advice to give to grieving parents

- ➡ Discuss the loss with your partner, keeping in mind that men and women grieve differently.
- ➡ Reframe “being strong”
- ➡ Talk to other parents that had a loss, join a support group.
- ➡ Seek help if feelings depression reaches a point of concern.



■ Perinatal loss has an impact on subsequent pregnancies.

- * Depression

- * Anxiety

- * Post –Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- * Anniversary of loss

Self Care and Grief

- Chaplains provide staff support.
- Be intentional about processing your own response to this loss.
- Re-humanizing yourself.
- Called to do the labor of maintaining a heart that is open, strong, clear, present. This requires an ongoing commitment to practice...



References:

- Badenhorst, W., & Hughes, P. (2007). Psychological aspects of perinatal loss. *Best Practice and Research: Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 21(2), 249–259.
- Mayo Clinic (2013). Miscarriage: Move toward healing. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pregnancy-loss-miscarriage/in-depth/pregnancy-loss/art-20047983?pg=2>
- National Institutes of Health (NIH). (2001a). Beginning quote by Dr. Elliot Luby – Bereavement and grieving. In H.S Schiff (Ed.), *The bereaved parent* (p23). New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Schwiebert, P. & Kirk, P. (2017) *When Hello Means Goodbye*. Grief Watch Publications.