

Resilience in the Face of Grief and Loss:

A Curriculum for Pediatric Learners

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Curriculum Components

General Introduction and Instructional Manual

Table of Contents and Objectives, Parts A–D

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Table of Contents and Objectives, Parts A-D

Part A. Understanding Grief and Loss in Children and Their Families

Part A: Files and Content

A.1 Discussion Guide: Understanding Grief and Loss in Children

A.2 SLIDASET: Understanding Grief and Loss in Children

Learning Objectives

1. *Describe the overarching process of grief and loss, including:*
 - a. *Stages of grief reactions: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance*
 - b. *Difference between “normal” and “complicated” grief*
2. *Explain how the child’s concept of death develops from toddlerhood through adolescence*
3. *Demonstrate knowledge of the stages of acquisition of information that occur in children with life threatening illnesses, including:*
 - a. *What children understand and know as their diseases progresses*
 - b. *How to assist children’s understanding in discussions of medical information*

continued

Part A: Files and Content (continued)

A.3 Discussion Guide: Understanding Grief and Loss in Children

A.4 SLIDASET: Understanding Grief and Loss in Children

Learning Objectives

4. *Describe common reactions and coping mechanisms of siblings with sick brothers or sisters, including:*
 - a. *How children understand what it means to be sick and what causes sickness*
 - b. *How illness in a brother or sister affects well siblings*
 - c. *The child's development of the concept of death*
 - d. *How siblings can be incorporated into end-of-life care of a terminally ill brother or sister*
 - e. *How siblings grieve*

Part A: Files and Content (continued)

A.5 Discussion Guide: Understanding Sibling Grief and Loss

A.6 SLIDASET: Understanding Sibling Grief and Loss

A.7 Ethics Case Analysis Guide

Learning Objectives

5. *Describe the ethical principles involved in end of life decision-making (e.g., resuscitation and DNR orders) and discussion of goals of care:*
 - a. *Develop capacity to identify ethical issues that complicate end of life experiences for patients, families and providers*
 - b. *Discuss a simple method to describe and analyze ethical issues*
 - c. *Focus on issues of futility as a common and complex ethical concern*
 - d. *Develop strategies to help families and providers discuss and manage futility in a way that will help reduce burden on families and avoid excessive moral distress for providers*

Part A: Files and Content (continued)

A.8 Discussion Guide: Spiritual Humility at the Time of Illness and Dying

A.9 SLIDASET: Spiritual Humility at the Time of Illness and Dying

Part A Key References

Learning Objectives

6. *Understand how a person's beliefs, culture, and spirituality, as well as background and experiences, might affect their response to communication of sensitive information*
 - a. *Describe physician behaviors that families believe to be helpful when faced with life-limiting illness or death of a child*
 - b. *Demonstrate understanding of the specifics of different cultural or spiritual beliefs that may impact families and assist in their integration of the experience*

Part B. Communicating with Families about Severe and Terminal Illness in Their Children

Part B: Files and Content

- B.1** Discussion Guide: Communicating with Families about Severe and Terminal Illness in Their Children
- B.2** SLIDASET: What is Bad News?
- B.3** Toolkit: Developing Skills in Interpersonal Communications
- B.4** Cases: Advanced Communication Skills
- B.5** APPENDIX: When Things Go Wrong

Part B: Key References

Learning Objectives

1. *Use skill in sharing bad news, including disclosure of a life altering diagnosis, death of a patient, and occurrence of a medical error; specifically:*
 - a. *Answer the question “Am I going to die?” posed by a 4,8 and 15 year old*
 - b. *Respond when a parent starts to cry in the middle of a conversation*
 - c. *Respond effectively when a parent exhibits anger*
 - d. *Be able to state, in under a minute, that a patient received a drug in error*
2. *Skillfully lead a discussion of end of life issues and goals of care (e.g., do not resuscitate measures) with a family whose child is severely or terminally ill.*
 - a. *Listen generously to the grief of patients and families*
 - b. *Counsel parents about how to identify a child/teen who is experiencing complicated grief*

Part C. Managing Emotions after Difficult Patient Care Experiences

Part C: Files and Content

- C.1** Discussion Guide: Managing Emotions after Difficult Patient Care Experiences

Learning Objectives

1. *Recognize how a physician’s responses to grief and loss may either:*
 - a. *interfere with a patient’s and family’s experience and coping and distance the physician from the patient, or*
 - b. *comfort the patient and family and help the physician cope*

Part C: Files and Content (continued)

- C.2** Discussion Guide: Integrating a Difficult Patient Experience
- C.3** SLIDASET: Integrating a Difficult Patient Care Experience
- C.4** Cases: Getting to Closure After a Medical Error

Learning Objectives

2. *Demonstrate ability to integrate one’s response to a difficult experience, including acknowledgement of feelings of real or perceived guilt and discussion of medical errors*

Part C: Files and Content (continued)

- C.5** Discussion Guide: Senior Resident Debriefing after Difficult Patient Experiences
- C.6** SLIDASET: Leading a Debriefing Session
- C.7** Cases: Senior Debriefing Role Playing

Learning Objectives

- 3. *Skillfully conduct a debriefing meeting (while understanding one's own emotions), that analyzes the event, considers perceptions of family and members of the medical team, and asks critical questions to help the team members reach closure*

Part C: Files and Content (continued)

- C.8** Discussion Guide: The Physician's Role When a Child Dies
- C.9** SLIDASET: When a Patient Dies: Physician Self-Care
- C.10** Cases: After a Child Has Died

Part C: Key References

Learning Objectives

- 4. *Describe the important steps to take after the death of a child, including saying good-bye to a patient, demonstrating good timing of future contact with the family, such as a follow-up meeting; attending a memorial service; and/or sending a note to the grieving family, in addition to initiating self-care*

Part D. Introduction to Personal Wellness

Part D: Files and Content

- D.1** Discussion Guide: Introduction to Personal Wellness
- D.2** SLIDASET: Maintaining Personal Wellness
- D.3** Developing a Wellness Learning Plan
- D.4** APPENDIX: Physicians Must Address Emotional Toll of Patient's Death
- D.5** APPENDIX: The Code

Part D Key References

Learning Objectives

- 1. *Occupational Strategies to maintain balance at work*
 - a. *Learn to relax*
 - b. *Promote collegiality*
 - c. *Set limits*
 - d. *Establish good doctor-patient relationships*
 - e. *Transition from work to home*

continued

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2. *Practice healthy approaches to life that help one to:*
 - a. *Find meaning in one's work*
 - b. *Maintain humor*
 - c. *Keep perspective*
 - d. *Preserve time for play*
 - e. *Celebrate successes*
 - f. *Find daily release to let go of day's concerns*
3. *Practice emotional and cognitive strategies to maintain personal balance and resilience, including:*
 - a. *Ways to express emotions*
 - b. *Healthy ways to grieve in the face of loss*
 - c. *Time alone to reflect*
 - d. *Active debriefing and talking to others*
 - e. *Journaling*
4. *Build and sustain healthy and nurturing relationships with others: at home and work:*
 - a. *Connect with family and friends*
 - b. *Make family and friends a priority*
 - c. *Build a network of work relationships to serve as a second "family"*
5. *Seek refuge and support in spirituality or religion, in keeping with your personal beliefs*
 - a. *Belief in something beyond oneself*
 - b. *Find strength in a community of shared beliefs, values, and efforts*
 - c. *Practice prayer or meditation*
6. *Practice self-care through:*
 - a. *Healthy sleep hygiene*
 - b. *Medical/mental health care*
 - c. *Exercise/yoga*
 - d. *Time in nature*
 - e. *Relaxation and vacation*
 - f. *Hobbies*