

# ***Resilience in the Face of Grief and Loss:***

*A Curriculum for Pediatric Learners*

## **Part C: Section C.6**

Leading a Debriefing Session

# Objectives

- Identify situations following which debriefing sessions would be beneficial
- List benefits of a debriefing session
- Recognize the need for debriefing and support in others
- Conduct a successful mock debriefing session
  - Analyze the event
  - Identify one's own emotions
  - Inquire about perceptions of family and medical team members
  - Ask critical questions to help team members reach closure
  - Comment on how medical team member responses may affect patient and family interactions

# Reflective Exercise

Think about a patient care experience when either:

- One of the trainees working with you had a hard time dealing with grief or loss.
- You were in that situation as a trainee.

Complete Journaling Worksheet: Preparing to Lead Debriefings, then share with the person sitting next to you.

# Background

Multiple national organizations have recognized and supported the needs of physicians dealing with grief and loss.

- IOM report: “When Children Die”
- AAP Statement on Palliative Care
- APA Educational Guidelines

## Background (continued)

- In a study examining pediatric residents' use of debriefing after a patient's death:
  - 31% of residents acknowledged guilt
  - 74% of residents debriefed after at least one patient's death
  - Residents stated that they had debriefed after 30% of patient deaths
  - Higher odds of debriefing with:
    - Inpatient death vs. ED death
    - Death of a previously healthy patient vs. death of a patient with chronic disease

Serwint J. One Method of Coping: Resident Debriefing After the Death of a Patient.  
J Pediatr August 2004

# Benefits of Debriefing

- Healthy coping skills of some group members shared with those who coped less effectively.
- Acceptance of normal responses to distressing situation; increased mutual understanding and empathy among group members.
- Taking time together to identify the personal impact of trauma and loss.
- Through validating experiences and responses, residents are freed to return to their own work on behalf of others.

DR Hanna, M Romana Debriefing after a crisis What's the best way to resolve moral distress?  
Don't suffer in silence. August 2007 Nursing Management

# Debriefing Framework

Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review purpose of bereavement debriefing sessions.</li><li>• Invite participants to give names and answer the question: “How were you involved in care for this patient and family?”</li></ul>
Factual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review time of death circumstances.</li></ul>
Case Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What was it like taking care of this patient?</li><li>• What was the most distressing aspect of the case?</li><li>• What was the most satisfying aspect of the case?</li></ul>
Grief Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What have you experienced since the death? (Elicit physical, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, or spiritual responses)</li></ul>
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What will you remember most about this patient/family?”</li></ul>

(continued)

# Debriefing Framework (continued)

Strategies for Coping with Grief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are you taking care of yourself so you can continue to provide care for other patients and families?</li><li>• Review grief coping strategies.</li><li>• Review available resources.</li></ul>
Lessons Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What lessons did we learn from caring for this patient/family?</li></ul>
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acknowledge care provided.</li><li>• Review bereavement support available for families and staff.</li></ul>

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# Cases

- Small group case-based role plays (Section C.8)
- Each senior resident leads one debriefing
- Rotate supporting roles among group members

# Resources

- How to identify someone at risk for needing more support?
- What resources are available at your institution?