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.
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
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

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 | • Review purpose of bereavement debriefing sessions.  
|                          | • Invite participants to give names and answer the question: “How were you involved in care for this patient and family?” |
| Factual Information      | • Review time of death circumstances. |
| Case Review              | • What was it like taking care of this patient?  
|                          | • What was the most distressing aspect of the case?  
|                          | • What was the most satisfying aspect of the case? |
| Grief Responses          | • What have you experienced since the death? (Elicit physical, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, or spiritual responses) |
| Emotional                | • What will you remember most about this patient/family?” |
### Strategies for Coping with Grief

- How are you taking care of yourself so you can continue to provide care for other patients and families?
- Review grief coping strategies.
- Review available resources.

### Lessons Learned

- What lessons did we learn from caring for this patient/family?

### Conclusion

- Acknowledge care provided.
- Review bereavement support available for families and staff.
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?