



A Canadian Experience of Supporting Grieving Families through Telehealth in the Experience of COVID

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Abstract:

The Hospital for Sick Children supports families who have had a child die that has been in their care, as either an inpatient or outpatient. Our Pathways Grief Support Program has been in place for 7 years and offers resources and support, along with access to therapy for families of children from pre-birth to 21 years.

With the unprecedented experiences of COVID on our families, we have had to transition our clinical services for bereavement support from in person groups and psycho-educational support¹ to online methods. With engagement and requests of the families we serve, we have been able to extend this support in anticipation of a second and third wave. Throughout this transition, the Pathways program has ensured that support continues to exist despite limited physical access to people. Our perspective of all of this includes that creativity and responsiveness can be quickly brought into play when issues of access suddenly change.

We are evaluating each event in order to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our populations.

We encourage others to think outside the box in these times to offer what is needed for grieving families.

Biography

Lori Ives-Baine is a nurse who has worked in neonatal and pediatric care for almost 31 years. She was a bedside nurse and bereavement coordinator in NICU at the hos-



pital for 23 years and has been in the hospital-wide Grief Support Coordinator role for the past 7.5. She has completed her Master in Nursing (UofT) along with a Bioethics specialty as well as a Certificate in Traumatology. She teaches internationally and has published on topics including care for the caregiver; legacy creation; withdrawal of artificial hydration and nutrition in the newborn and other topics.

Publication of speakers:

- 1) Pugh, J.E. & Ives-Baine, L. (2012). Using technology to connect families- should we? *International Childbirth Educators Association Journal*, 27(2): 83-85.
- 2) Donelan, K., Barreto, E., Sossong, S., Michael, C., Estrada, J. Cohen, A., Wozniak, J. and Schwamm, L. (2019). Patient and clinician experiences with telehealth for patient follow-up care. *American Journal of Managed Care*; 24(1): 40-44.
- 3) Perrin, A., Duggan, M. (2018). Americans' internet access: 2000-2015. Pew Research Center website. www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-2015.

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