

Assisting Sudden Death Families in an Emergency Department Setting

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Families arriving in a hospital emergency department to the news of an impending death or death notification of a loved one, need and want the support and assistance of sensitive and well informed hospital professionals.

In order for hospital staff to be well prepared to assist the family and friends, the staff must reflect evidence based grief practice and must be willing to examine any fears or prejudices that they may hold about family rights in an emergency setting.

This presentation will look at early grief responses of families, as identified in the literature. It will also offer , on DVD, the experience and reflection of an adult daughter whose grief needs were not addressed following the traumatic death of her mother. The presenter will contrast the daughter's experience with an alternative option that reflects current practice.

A model for assisting grieving families will be presented using the currently accepted crisis practice of Psychological First Aid. The model will follow the arrival of the family to the emergency department, presence during and after resuscitation, time with the body and a review of closure paper work.

Participants will be encouraged to exchange ideas about their emergency department practice experiences.