Debriefing

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| Examples of Critical Incidents | Examples of Difficult Situations  (*not all are incidents*): |
| * Sudden decompensation of a patient * Unexpected outcome * Medical error * Angry parents * Death of a patient * Recognizing and coping with uncertainty * Inability to control outcomes | * Non-accidental trauma victims * Technology dependent, neurologically impaired patients * Disparities in resources * Challenging families * Patients with poor prognosis or at end of life * Balancing work with spending time with families |

Strategies to respond to challenging patient situations:

* One size does not fit all
* Individual and personal journey
* Debriefing is one tool

Debriefing:

* Debrief with team, faculty member, colleague or friend
* Acknowledge and articulate emotional impact
* Address ways to integrate experiences, rather than pretend that “it never happened”
* You need to have direct and deliberate dialogue to move beyond a critical incident
* Event specific
  + Immediately after
  + Shortly after (within 1 week) to allow for reflection
* Benefits
  + Safe environment for sharing thoughts and feelings with colleagues
  + Integrate experiences
  + Improve or modify future reactions
  + Honor and value the lives of the patients and families
  + Difficult or tragic experience becomes formative learning experience

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| A Frame work for Debriefing | |
| Welcome and  Introductions | • Review purpose of bereavement debriefing sessions. Create safe environment  • Invite participants to give names and answer the question:  *“How were you involved in care for this patient and family?”* |
| Factual Information | • Review event circumstances OR review certain cases or situations that have been distressing |
| 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 event? (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. |
| Throughout | • Acknowledge and normalize emotions  • Keep debriefing on track  • Try to elicit from all participants without pressure |

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