MUSC Palliative Care: Legacy Work

Jessica Bullington, BSN, RN, CHPN
Palliative Care Program Specialist
Legacy Work

• Memory making at end-of-life.

• Transitional objects that promote coping and connection to family during long hospitalization.

• A form of meaning-based coping
  • Finding meaning & purpose during a stressful event.

• Allows people to shift awareness and focus on the humanity in the moment.

• Facilitates first steps in the bereavement process.
How is Legacy Work Practiced?

- Hand print impression kits
- Thumb prints
- Photos
- Creating cards
- Journaling
- Letter writing
- Painted hand prints
  - on decorative paper, canvases, book covers, rocks, stuffed animals
- ECG tracings
- Special events
- Services of Remembrance

Think outside of the box!
“How do I talk to families about Legacy Work?”

- EOL vs. chronic, serious illness
  - Long-hospitalizations
  - Poor/uncertain prognosis
- Visuals help!
- Meet them where they are
- Legacy work = Connection
- Normalize emotional responses
- Encourage participation
Transforming Grief in the Children’s Hospital...

Children’s Organizational Resource
Acknowledging Life and loss
CORAL Program

- **Bereavement Database:**
  - Send patient’s MRN to peds-pct@musc.edu
  - Peds team will enter patients into the database

- **Cart Locations:**
  - 8th floor NICU – inside physician’s conference room
  - 4th floor PCICU – Clean utility room (behind the door)
  - 5th floor Antepartum – Storage room 555
  - Keys are either at the nurse’s station or in the narcotics drawer of the Acudose
Certified Child Life Specialists

- Professionals trained to help children and their families understand and manage challenging healthcare experiences.
- Skilled in providing developmental, educational and therapeutic interventions for children and their families under stress.
- Provide support for growth and development while also recognizing family strengths and individuality, and respecting different methods of coping.
- Expertise in pediatric bereavement, supporting both parents and siblings.
Transforming Grief in the Adult Hospitals…

Ellie’s Way
Collaboration and Healing…