



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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Enhancement of Patient Support Group Service for the Bereaved Couples who Experience Pregnancy Loss

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Introduction

Death of an unborn or stillborn baby can be a major crisis in life. The bereaved women are at risk of developing psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and complicated grief. The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, United Christian Hospital has developed a multidisciplinary bereavement team in providing bereavement service for eighteen years. The service includes providing them psychological support and individual counselling during hospitalization and after discharge. During interviewing with the bereaved women, they expressed loneliness and inadequate family or social support when facing grief. Literature shows that support group is effective in facilitating emotional, instrumental, appraisal, information support and social companionship.

Objectives

Therefore, the bereavement service has been expanded to organize sharing group to facilitate their healthy adaption to loss since 4 / 2015. The Bereavement Sharing Group can facilitate the bereaved couples to share, connect with others, gain support, decrease the sense of loneliness and cope better with loss.

Methodology

Bereavement team nurses organized sharing support group every 3 months. After the first nurse interview by team nurse, the bereaved women and their spouses who experienced pregnancy loss (miscarriage, stillbirth and termination of pregnancy due to fetal abnormality) and did not have active psychiatric symptoms were invited to participate in the sharing group. Ex-patients were invited to join the group as volunteer to share their coping, and support new participants. Two-hour therapeutic activities would be held such as narration of bereavement experience, psycho-education, sharing, "DIY" baby card, and personal reflection. Participants were invited to complete an evaluation form at the end.

Result

Up till now, three sharing groups were held. There were total 16 participants, including

their spouses. All the participants noted that the sharing atmosphere was warm, supportive and secure. They were all willing to share and express their grief feelings with each other. They all agreed that the sharing helped them to facilitate their ventilation of grief feelings, connect with baby spiritually, better understand the gender difference in coping with grief, learn valuable coping from psych-education, gain tangible and psychological support, and increased confidence to move on to life. They realized that they were not alone in grief journey, decreased sense of loneliness, and treasured their "DIY" baby card. Some participants expressed thanks to nurses and their families even in times of loss. After every group sharing, they even organized social groups themselves for continued mutual support.