

# **The Forget-Me-Not Bereavement Program for Staff and Families**

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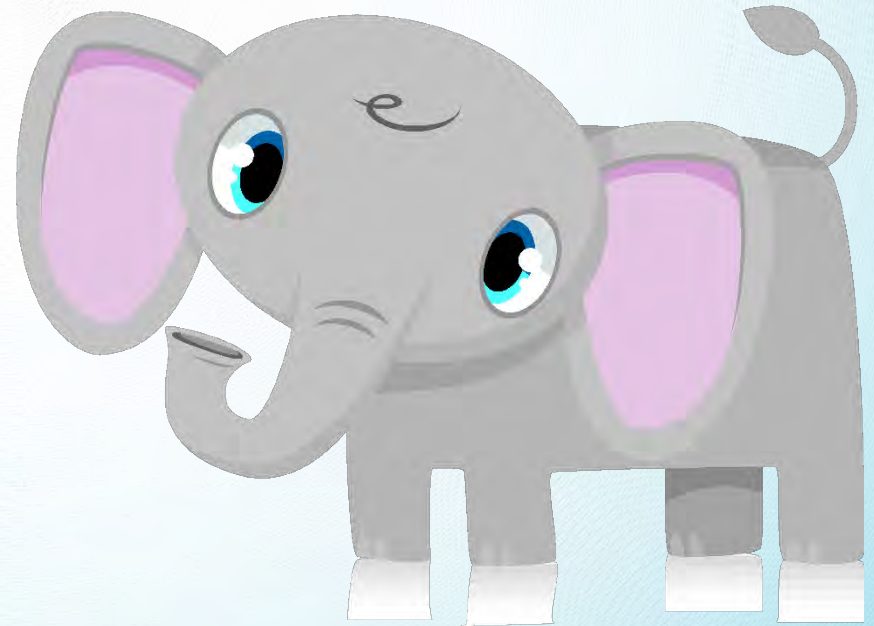
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# Journey of Grief / Bereavement

- Assessing the need for support
- Components of program
- Supporting the whole family
- Mourning vs. Grief
- Companionship vs. Treating
- Examples



# Where To Start

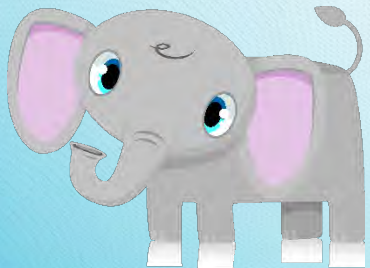
- Burn-out/compassion fatigue
- Lost connections with families
- Families seeking out support groups or connections with staff or familiar patients

\*Are staff able to allocate office time for mailings, calls, paperwork and planning ?



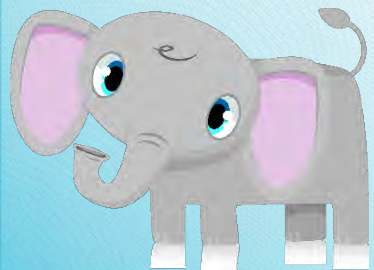
# Forms and Follow-up

- Intake form
- Folder and *First Things First* sheet
- Instruction sheets: Nursing and support staff
- Ideas for legacy building activities - even Corner's Cases within limits/guidelines
- Mailings: 2 week, 6 week, 3 month phone call, 6 and 18 month, 1 and 2 Year Anniversary, Holiday season card with coping tips, 25 month-Survey card



# Staff Involvement

- Committee Members:
  - monthly rotation of maintenance program
  - help plan and attend memorial service
  - Bi-monthly meetings
- Additional staff support:
  - staff directly involved with family to make calls
  - attend funerals
  - make referrals to community agencies



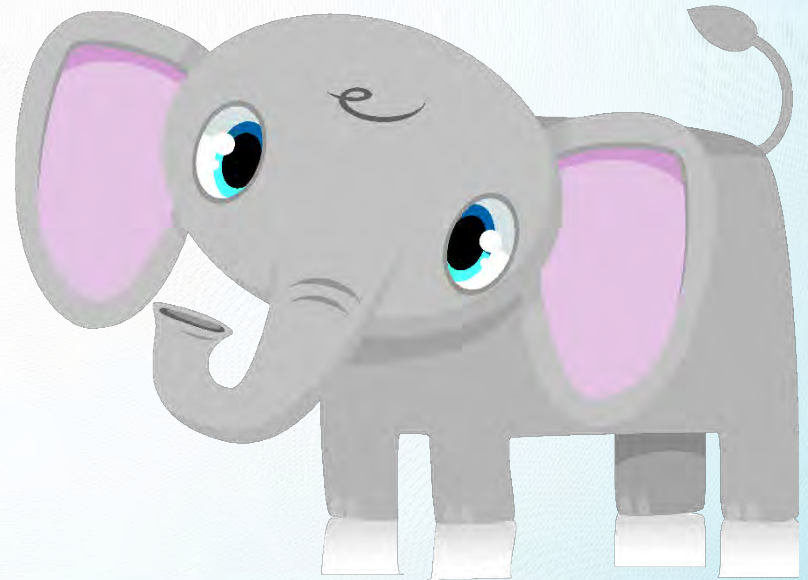
# Interdisciplinary in-servicing for staff

- Departments:
  - Pastoral Care or Chaplains
  - Social Work
  - Nursing Staff
  - Emergency Department
  - Child Life



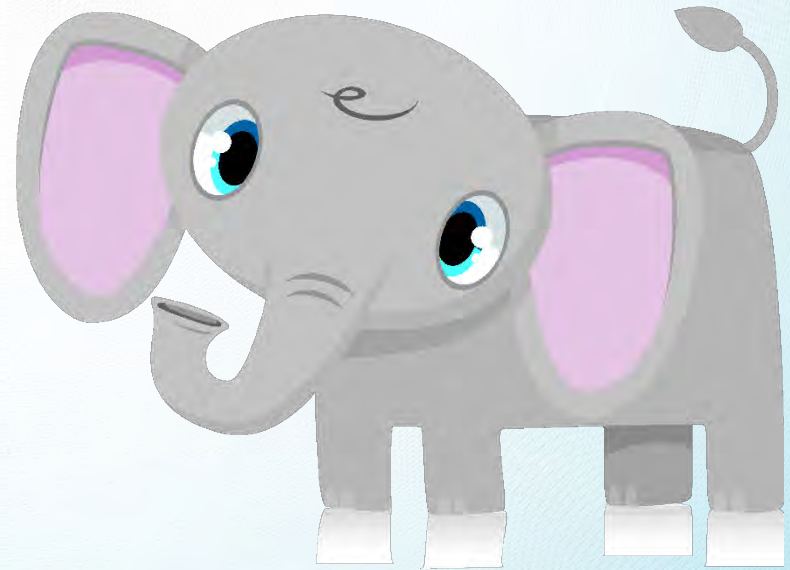
# Components of the Program

- Child Life involvement at the time of death
- Mailings and follow -up after death
- Committee members involvement and responsibilities



# Integration of Child Life into Program

- Explanations of death
- Offering services/programs
- Challenging situations





# Talking to Children

- Do not avoid topic of death
  - use every opportunity available to discuss and teach
  - use general, direct, and simple language
  - talk in a positive way and use everyday examples to teach coping strategies
- Be Honest
  - avoid clichés such as: sleeping, passed away, lost, or taken from us, or God needed him more than we did
- Address fears and misconceptions
  - assure the child that someone will always be there to take care of them
- Allow and encourage expression of feelings
  - Encourage and provide use of security object for child



# Working with Siblings

- Be Honest!
- Use concrete words
- Transitional object
- Therapeutic play and activities
- Age appropriate explanations
  - Glove Example



# Examples of how to talk to a child about death:

- Explain how our soul is our personality. It makes us happy, sad, love and creates/keeps memories
- Explain how bodies are like a glove and our souls are like our hand inside the glove. All your life they work together as one. Then someday when our body stops working the way it is supposed to, the body dies. Even when the body dies, the soul still lives.
- Take your hand out of the glove and explain death, funerals or burial based on family and religious beliefs
- Discuss how everyone will die sometime. Some people could die young if their body does not work the way it is suppose to, BUT most people live to be very old before they die.



# Introducing yourself and the program

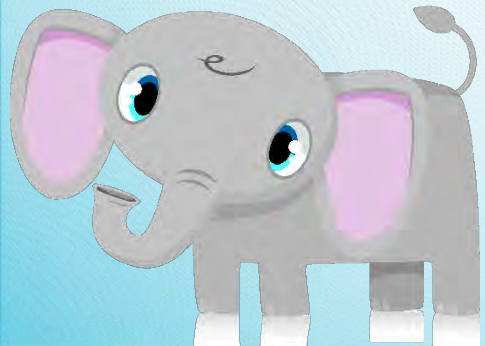
- Gather as much information as possible beforehand
- Take a deep breath
- Put yourself in the families shoes
- Introduce yourself briefly
- Explain the Forget-Me-Not program after memory making activities are completed.

\*Empower staff to know how and when to offer services



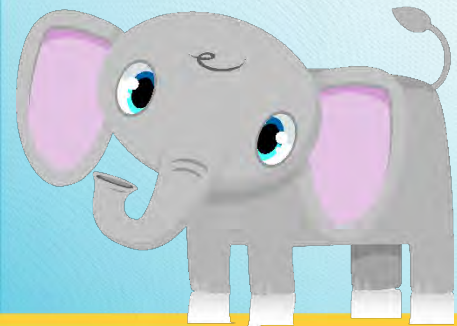
# Introduction of Program to Families at Time of Death

- Introductions:
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ and I work in the Children’s Hospital/department. I would like to offer you and your family ways to build some memories.”
  - “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ and part of my job is to help families during difficult times in the hospital. Would you like me to help you make a handprint/hand tracing of your son/daughter (use child’s name when able)?”



# Initiating Memory Making

- Use Concrete words
  - Handprint/beaded bracelet vs. Memory Making/Legacy Building
- Helpful words/phrases
  - We can help you build some memories now, as well as remember stories you want to hold on to.
  - These memories will not replace your son or daughter, but they will help you remember the beautiful things about their life.
  - I don't want to push anything on you that you are not ready for.
  - Other families have told me....
  - Tell me about your child....



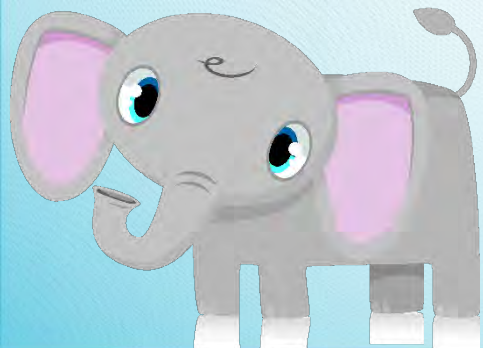
# How to initiate memory making:

- Memories are great things to help you during this time. We can help you build some memories now as well as help you remember stories and details you want to hold onto. One of the hardest things to do today will be to leave without your child. Because this seems like an impossible task, we want to offer you some opportunities to have something to walk out of here with to help fill this hole.
- I don't want to push anything on you that you are not ready for. Families tell me it has helped them to try some of the things I have here to get through this difficult time.
- Could we take a moment and do some activities that will help you build memories with your son / daughter. These memories will not replace your son or daughter, but they will help you remember the beautiful things about their life and start the healing process.



# How to initiate memory making:

- Some of the things we are going to offer you may seem kind of strange or uncomfortable to you. It is okay to say NO to anything we offer. We may also forget to offer some thing that would help you, so please do not be afraid to ask for anything. Nothing is unusual or wrong to think, feel or need during your journey.
- This is a journey or club you never wanted to join but now that we are here, let's think of some things we can do to help with this process.
- It is okay to start in the process and at anytime if you need a break or time away we can do that. Take it Slow and Steady.





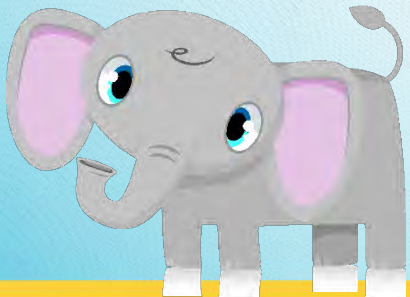
# Other Helpful Phrases

- Right now you are probably feeling pretty numb or in shock. You also may feel waves of emotions or many emotions at one time. Whatever you are feeling right now is OK. It is also okay to express these feelings by talking, crying, laughing, and using artwork or activities to build memories.
- I am here to help you sort through feelings and provide support for you and your family while you make decisions, preparations or participate in the care and acts of remembrance of your loved one.
- You don't have to do anything at all. We can just set here and talk or sit here and be quiet.
- Some people are going to be truly helpful and supportive during this journey and some are going to think they are helping, but they are NOT. Don't be afraid to surround yourself with those that truly help you and remember to balance it with some alone time.



# Legacy Building

- Making a hand or footprint of the child and loved one. Use Crayola Model Magic, paint or stamping ink.
- Create a collage or memory box of pictures, personal items and tokens of favorite memories.
- Plant a tree or flowers in memory of the loved one.
- Write a story about a favorite memory.
- Have family members or friends share messages or memories in a journal.



# Legacy Building

- Create a family activity that will become a tradition (ice cream night, volunteering, having a picnic)
- Expression through art.
- Opportunities for dramatic or role play.
- Create a memory book or picture album.



# Therapeutic Activities for Kids

- Making a hand or footprint of the child and loved one.
- Create a collage or memory box of pictures, personal items and tokens of favorite memories.
- Blowing bubbles. As the bubbles pop talk about how they have all gone and explain the transition from temporary to permanent.
- Write a story about a favorite memory or experience.
- Have family members or friends share messages or memories in a journal, video, or audio recording format.
- Expression through art.



# Therapeutic Activities for Kids

- Opportunities for dramatic or role play.
- Create a memory book or picture album or display board.
- Make a bracelet, necklace, or keychain.
- Write a letter to your loved one
- Crafting materials to make an ornament or token to remember
- Make a picture frame



# Supporting the Whole Family

- Uses Family -Centered Care Theory: addressing and educating on issues relating to each family member.
  - Parents: Legacy building activities and ceramic heart
  - Siblings: Stuffed elephant, explanations and activities for processing and creating memories, and make a referral to our local center - Erin's House for Grieving Children
  - Yearly Memorial service



# Special Considerations

- Chronic patients
- Coroner's cases
- Religious/Cultural considerations
- Staff members children
- Applying program to other special cases



# Outward Expression

## Mourning





# Inward Expressions

Grief



# Mourning vs. Grief

- Outward expression of thoughts or feelings regarding the death
- Social, cultural & religious dependent
- Standards set by society - 3 days off...
- Inward unique way of dealing with thoughts and feelings toward death and loss
- Process is powerful and unpredictable
- Some experience grief bursts, repeat given stages, or get stuck in this process



# Mourning vs. Grief

- Shock
  - Awareness of Loss
  - Withdrawal and Conservation
  - Healing
  - Renewal
- Denial
  - Anger
  - Bargaining
  - Depression or Sadness
  - Acceptance



# Companioning vs. Treating

- Companioning:
  - walk along side
  - provide support
  - “experience with” someone
- Treating:
  - act upon something
  - Literally it means to drag along



# Companioning vs. Treating

- Companioning means...
  - Being present in the pain - not taking the pain away
  - Going into the wilderness of the soul - not trying to find a way out
  - Honoring the spirit - not focusing on intellect
  - Listening with the heart - not analyzing with the head
  - Bearing witness to the struggle / story of others
  - Walking along side - not leading



# Companioning vs. Treating

- Companioning means...
  - Discovering the gifts of sacred silence
  - Being still - not frantic movement forward
  - Respecting disorder and confusion - not imposing order and logic

Learning from others - not teaching them

  - Compassionate curiosity - not expertise



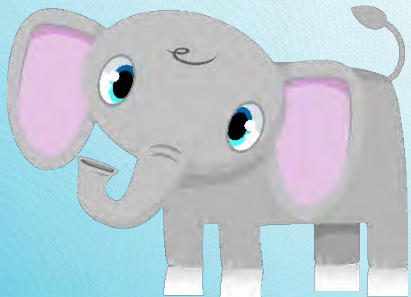
# Factors Complicating Grief

- Nature of the relationship
- Circumstances of the death
- The support system
- Personality of the grieving person
- Unique personality of the person who died
- Your religious / spiritual / cultural background
- The ritual or funeral experience



# Examples

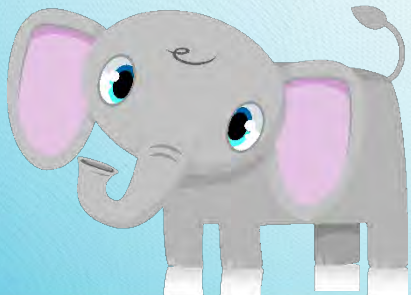
- Coroner cases
- Deaths by suicide and other nonaccidental methods
- Families not wanting to disclose to patient or siblings about death
- Abuse cases
- Custody battles





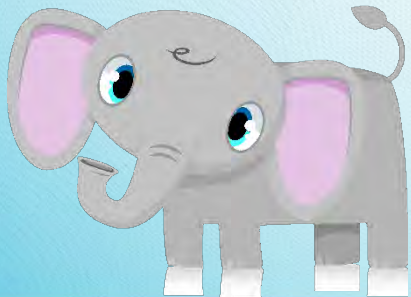
# Examples

- Memory making many hours after the death
- Cultural Sensitivities
  - Amish family
  - Muslim family
- Teen parents & their families
- Helping kids/grandkids of adult patients



# Saying goodbye

- How to help facilitate the final “goodbye”
  - How to help the family leave the hospital



# Comments or Questions?



# THANK YOU!

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