2019 Recap

Resolve Through Sharing Partners With Local Ambulance Agency to Develop Bereavement Protocol

Since the beginning of the Resolve Through Sharing (RTS) program, relationships with other individuals and organizations have been critical to the dissemination of RTS practice. Bereavement education programming designed for emergency responders is the latest result.

Early last year, RTS was approached by Tri-State Ambulance of La Crosse, WI and was asked to assist in the development of a bereavement protocol to be used at the scene of fatal incidents. Responders receive little to no bereavement training and/or education. This can leave them feeling ill-equipped and helpless when supporting survivors. To address this issue, Tri-State and RTS worked on establishing a protocol that would provide responding personnel with bereavement education, tools to use in the field, and support materials to present to the bereaved.

Phase one of the protocol was launched in January 2019. Tri-State Paramedic Taylor Buchanan and RTS Lead Educator Marie Walter announced it at a Tri-State Pre-Hospital Advanced Care and Education (PACE) meeting. They discussed the need, introduced the support materials, and reviewed the plan for education. Emergency personnel would be given access to the RTS Bereavement Module 3-Pack and would be required to complete one of its courses — Communicating With the Bereaved. Additionally, the agency would stock their trucks with an RTS support folder consisting of tools for responders and a variety of materials for the bereaved.

Throughout the pilot period, RTS and Tri-State gathered feedback on the protocol. As a result, they implemented a few modifications to the support folder. Overall, the data suggested the protocol was having a positive impact on staff and the bereaved. In November, RTS Director Mary Beth Hensel and Tri-State Paramedic Taylor Buchanan presented this data at the Trends in Emergency Care Conference held at Gundersen Health System. Their presentation focused on a standard of bereavement care to be implemented by emergency personnel. Using the Tri-State story as an example, they discussed ways of addressing issues surrounding lack of bereavement education and training.

As RTS looked to finalize the materials created for Tri-State, they began to focus on a version of the folder that could be used by emergency personnel throughout the country. The “Pre-Hospital Bereavement Support Folder” is now available to purchase in our online store. Product information can be found at www.ResolveThroughSharing.org.

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This year saw the launch of Compassionate Goodbyes—a bereavement education program for veterinary professionals. In 2019, Compassionate Goodbyes held two workshops for local audiences. The first workshop—Enhancing Communication Skills: When Clients Are Faced With the Death of a Pet—was presented in May, and the second workshop—Incorporating Ritual and Memory-Making Into Your Practice—was presented in October. Additionally, Compassionate Goodbyes launched their website, developed a product line, and conducted a pulse survey with RTS customers.

We are grateful for those of you who took the time to complete our survey. Since its inception in 1981, RTS has incorporated profound stories of loss in its education and support materials. This survey was our first step in ensuring similar authenticity of Compassionate Goodbyes programming.

Comments from RTS professionals and customers included those listed below. Relationship- and evidence-based practices and principles were highlighted throughout the stories. In some instances, these practices and principles were incorporated during care; in others, they were not. In any case, the quotes ensured that we are on the right path—promoting consistent care based on relationship and evidence at the end of every pet’s life.

- "I think if I had all options and their potential consequences presented to me, I would have had less guilt over my choice or I would have made a different choice."
- "The first time I had a pet ‘put to sleep’ the veterinarian encouraged me to be with the pet. I remember it so distinctly because I was afraid and had never heard of such a thing (many years ago). Now I am much more enlightened.”
- “I have had good luck with Veterinarians providing care at the end of a companion animal’s life. At the same time, I think the whole staff would benefit from the RTS approach, validating the significance of the loss for the humans and the impact on the staff, giving practical guidance about how to be with people…”

To read the full survey, including comments, stories, and significant issues clients faced while navigating the end of a pet’s life, visit the Compassionate Goodbyes website.

https://www.gundersenhealth.org/compassionate-goodbyes/
In Our Community

RTS National Faculty and staff on the beautiful Mississippi River at the 2019 training event in La Crosse, WI. Pictured from the left is Manager and Business Development Consultant Nathan Haase, e-Learning Specialist and Business Coordinator Andrew Manson, members of National Faculty Seth Barna and Deb Rich, Materials Specialist Melissa Koch, Senior Office Assistant Kathleen Cassidy, Lead Educator Marie Walter, and System Bereavement Coordinator Ann Tyndall.

RTS staff teed off for Children’s Miracle Network in support of families in Gundersen Health System’s service region. Pictured from the left is Senior Office Assistant Kathleen Cassidy, Materials Specialist Melissa Koch, Director Mary Beth Hensel, Lead Educator Marie Walter, e-Learning Specialist and Business Coordinator Andrew Manson, and Manager and Business Development Consultant Nathan Haase.

RTS Director Emerita Dr. Rana Limbo with RTS Director Mary Beth Hensel at the La Crosse YWCA Tribute to Outstanding Womxn. Dr. Limbo nominated Ms. Hensel for the Women of Distinction award.

Members of the La Crosse community joined RTS and Gundersen staff for A Walk to Remember—a commemorative event sponsored by Gundersen Health System and Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare that is held each year in October. A Walk to Remember is a way for parents, family members, and others to honor babies who have died and promote public awareness about perinatal death.

In addition to the efforts in our community, RTS hosted 14 training events around the U.S. in 2019. RTS Coordinators held a record 61 2-day trainings around the world, including ones in Naples, Italy; Iwakuni, Japan; and Lakenheath, UK.
RTS Director Emerita Is First Editor in 2019 Publication

Handbook of Perinatal and Neonatal Palliative Care: A Guide for Nurses, Physicians, and Other Health Professionals, edited by RTS Co-Founder and Director Emerita Rana Limbo, PhD, RN, CPLC, FAAN; Charlotte Wool, PhD, RN; and Brian Carter, MD, FAAP, was released earlier this year by Springer Publishing Company. The book includes a chapter co-authored by Dr. Limbo and RTS Lead Educator Marie Walter. Darryl Owens, a member of the RTS National Faculty, also co-authored a chapter in the book.

The first resource of its kind, this authoritative handbook holistically addresses the multidimensional aspects of perinatal and neonatal palliative care.

https://resolvethroughsharing.dcopy.net/product/rts-2354

AJN Book of the Year Award Granted to RTS Director Emerita

In January, Guided Participation in Pediatric Nursing Practice: Relationship-Based Teaching and Learning With Parents, Children, and Adolescents was named a 2018 American Journal of Nursing book of the year. The book was co-edited by RTS Director Emerita Dr. Rana Limbo and includes a single-author chapter by her as well as a co-authored chapter with RTS Director Mary Beth Hensel.

Darryl Owens, a member of the RTS National Faculty, also co-authored a chapter in the book. This resource demonstrates the value of guided participation as a new and emerging healthcare model that integrates care across healthcare settings. RTS incorporates guided participation practice into its relationship-based teaching model and bereavement care standards.

https://resolvethroughsharing.dcopy.net/product/rts-2353

RTS Products

In 2019, RTS fulfilled over 1,600 orders for patient support and training materials. The top-selling patient support materials were the RTS Door Card and the brochure titled “Miscarriage.” The new RTS modules, released in 2018, also proved to be a popular item; over 500 orders were fulfilled for the RTS Bereavement Module 3-Pack.

When Someone You Love Dies Unexpectedly

Whether present at the death or receiving the shocking news from someone else, those grieving the sudden loss of a loved one can be overwhelmed by unfamiliar emotions and decisions that must be made immediately. This booklet provides readers with caring insights, practical suggestions, and words from others who have unexpectedly lost a loved one. Topics include performing final acts of caregiving, facing unique issues, coming to terms, caring for self, caring for others, and making meaning.

https://resolvethroughsharing.dcopy.net/product/rts-4140-e-when-someone-you-love-dies-unexpectedly

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Pre-Hospital Bereavement Support Folder

This folder is designed for emergency personnel and the bereaved at the scene of a fatal incident. Professional training for emergency responders often does not include a substantive bereavement component. This can leave responders feeling ill-equipped and helpless when supporting survivors in the field.

The product includes the following:

- tools for responders
  - a bereavement protocol checklist
  - relationship-based sample scripts designed to increase professionals’ comfort and skill levels
- support materials for the bereaved
  - “With Deepest Sympathy” brochure
  - “With Deepest Sympathy” card
  - Letter template from responding agency
  - “When Someone You Love Dies Unexpectedly” booklet
  - “Understanding Grief” brochure
  - “Resource Booklet”

https://resolvethroughsharing.dcopy.net/product/2504-e

Pediatric Death Support Folder

This conveniently pre-assembled resource allows staff to offer a complete, comprehensive support package that is specific to pediatric death. The Pediatric Death Support Folder includes:

- “Family & Friends: When a Child Dies” brochure
- “Gone but not forgotten” card
- Folder with “Resource Booklet”
- “When Your Child Is Dying” brochure
- Door Card
- “Understanding Grief” brochure

https://resolvethroughsharing.dcopy.net/product/2505-e
RTS Welcomes Two New Team Members

Ann E. Tyndall, MDiv, BCC, CPLC
Bereavement Coordinator, Gundersen Health System

Ann served as a Unitarian Universalist parish minister for 23 years before training to become a healthcare chaplain. She was drawn to working with people from diverse spiritual traditions, including those who did not identify as religious. The role of chaplain—not promoting a particular religious tradition—fit Ann’s inclusive approach to spirituality. She worked for a year as an affiliate chaplain at Chicago Children’s Hospital before accepting a position as staff chaplain at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, WI. There, Ann’s duties included providing bereavement support for patients and families. Though she attended deaths at any age, her primary responsibility was caring for families experiencing perinatal loss.

In June 2019, Ann accepted the position of Bereavement Coordinator for Gundersen Health System. Ann’s role at Gundersen is vital to Resolve Through Sharing’s long history of developing programming at home and disseminating to its national audience, and gleaning expertise from healthcare professionals across the country to incorporate at home.

Seth Barna, BSN, RN
RTS National Faculty

Seth received his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI, in 1999. Since then, he has worked at Gundersen Health System, spending the majority of his career in the critical care setting. Over many years of caring for those with a wide range of specialty conditions, Seth developed an interest and skill set for supporting patients, families, and staff through end-of-life care and the organ donation process. Seth served on the Gundersen Health System Organ Donation Team for approximately 15 years and spent 2 years as the Organ and Tissue Donation Liaison.

In 2019, Seth joined the Viterbo University Nursing Department as Adjunct Faculty. His special gifts and passion for this work are evidenced in the various educational opportunities he leads.
What’s in store for 2020?

RTS Training Schedule

Lake Granbury Medical Center
Granbury, TX
• Perinatal Death, March 2-3, 2020
• Coordinator Training, March 4, 2020
• Adult Death, March 5-6, 2020

Geisinger Medical Center
Danville, PA
• Perinatal Death, March 23-24, 2020
• Coordinator Training, March 25, 2020

Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center
Hershey, PA
• Perinatal Death, June 2-3, 2020
• Coordinator Training, June 4, 2020

UT Southwestern Medical Center
Dallas, TX
• Perinatal Death, June 7-8, 2020
• Coordinator Training, June 9, 2020

Gundersen Health System*
La Crosse, WI
• Perinatal Death, June 8-9, 2020
• Coordinator Training, June 10, 2020

* RTS is now accepting scholarship applications to attend our annual training event in La Crosse, WI. Scholarships cover registration fees for RTS Bereavement Training: Perinatal Death and RTS Coordinator Training. The application deadline is January 31. Apply today!

https://www.gundersenhealth.org/resolve-through-sharing/bereavement-training/scholarship-opportunities/

Exhibits

International Perinatal Bereavement Conference
Chicago, IL
September 30-October 3, 2020

American Organization for Nursing Leadership
Nashville, TN
March 18-21, 2020

NICU Leadership Forum
Naples, FL
April 19-23, 2020

Perinatal Leadership Forum
Naples, FL
November 15-18, 2020

Stay tuned as we continue to update our calendar!