

**Spiritual Care/ Chaplain
During Perinatal and
Infant Loss**

Holistic Care During Perinatal and Infant Loss



- Providing holistic care, the care for body, mind and spirit of our patients and their families, is definitely a team effort. “ It takes a village...”
- It is imperative that we are all conversant in the cultural, spiritual, and religious needs of our patients. How do we do this?
- First, we become compassionately curious, inquiring what is important to our patient during this time. And secondly we team up with a chaplain to assist in this assessment.

Spiritual Care for Patients, Family Members and Staff Members

- Each person will have their own response to perinatal/ infant loss
- As caregivers, it is our responsibility to be aware of who is needing that care, attention and support – even our coworkers or ourselves.
- We must also identify the most appropriate resources to help meet that person's need at that time: (A chaplain can help with this)
 - Chaplain
 - Their own pastor, priest, elder, etc.
 - A colleague
 - Social Worker
 - Being alone/ silence/ Renewal Room



Role of the Chaplain

- Providing spiritual, emotional and religious care for the patient, their loved ones and staff members
- Assisting with outreach to patient or family's religious community members for support
- Coordinating rites/rituals
- Providing Funeral Home information to families as they choose
- Debriefing with staff after difficult situations



Using Ritual

- Rituals can help create a memory connected with that person
- Examples of ritual:
 - Blessing/ baptizing the baby
 - Blessing/ prayer with family in the room
 - Naming the baby
 - Taking pictures with the baby
 - Allowing family members to hold the baby
 - Writing a letter to the baby/family
 - Specific other religious, individual or departmental rituals



“Ritual takes everyday items and orders them so they encapsulate mystery.”

By Danée Ashley, “Taking the Long View,” in *still a mother: journeys through perinatal bereavement* ed. Joy M Freeman & Tabatha D. Johnson (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2016), 15.

When to call a Chaplain

- Notifying a chaplain is already a part of the Perinatal and Infant Loss order set or protocol. Consider us as a resource to you and your patient for assisting you with cultural, spiritual, and religious needs.
- Every patient/family and staff member is going to be dealing with some level of grief following a loss. Call the chaplain as a resource for grief support for every pregnancy and infant loss.
- Even staff need support sometimes. Page the chaplain to assist in leading a debriefing after:
 - A difficult code
 - An unexpected death
 - Multiple difficult experiences in a short amount of time

How to Call a Chaplain

- Chaplains are available 24/7
- There are chaplains on-site at Women's Hospital:
 - Monday-Friday 8:00am- 2:00pm
 - After 2:pm weekdays, nights and weekends, the Chaplains at Methodist Main Campus on 84th St are available to come to Women's
- To call a chaplain, simply dial "0" for the operator and ask for a chaplain to be paged to your extension. Expect the chaplain to call you back for more information before coming out.
- Please note that it may take 20-30 minutes for a chaplain to be present in person on evenings, nights and weekends.

Our goal is to provide care for the entire person –
mind, body, and spirit –
in the midst of every perinatal loss.

The Meaning of Care;
let it be seen in what we do
and it will be felt, in the
way we care!



Questions?