

Bereavement support for families after critical illness



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Topics



- Overview of critical care
- Impact of covid-19 pandemic on end of life & bereavement
- What support we offer families following a death
- Benefits & limitations of service
- Example cases
- Quality improvement project – funded by the Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care

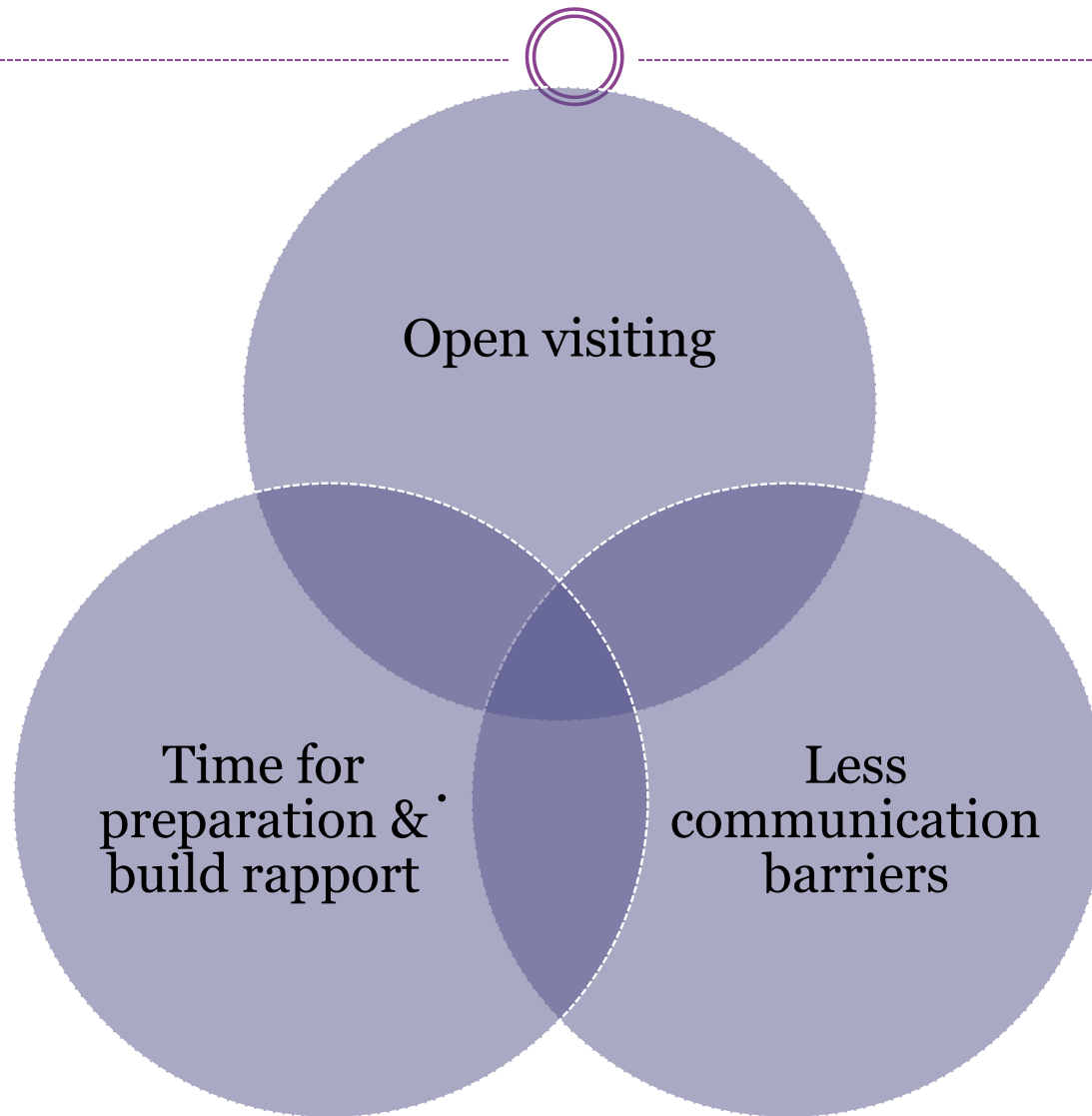
Overview



"Recovery from Critical Illness, The University of Edinburgh"
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/usher/anaesthesia/research/recovery-critical-illness> Accessed on 23/11/2021 12:18

- 42 beds – split into 4 pods
- General ICU - trauma, neuro & transplant
- 260 nurses
- Scary & alien environment for patients & families
- Preparation is essential
- Patient's can be unconscious
- Assurance that the patient is comfortable & pain free

Advantages pre-Covid-19



During Covid-19



- Difficult phone calls
- Families alone at home
- Reduced amount of support for families
- PPE affecting communication
- Visitation halted
- Terrifying for patients

Bereavement follow-up components



Memory
making

Info
Booklet

Follow-up
card

Follow-up
call

Survey

Open door policy

Dedicated phone & email

Chats with experienced
nurse/consultant

Assurance on care delivered

Advice on counselling

Advice on children's grief

Bereavement follow-up



- Suddenness of deaths are traumatising
 - Highly “medicalised” deaths
- Families will develop questions over time
- Without follow-up, questions can go unanswered
 - Complicated grief & bereavement

Running a nurse-led service



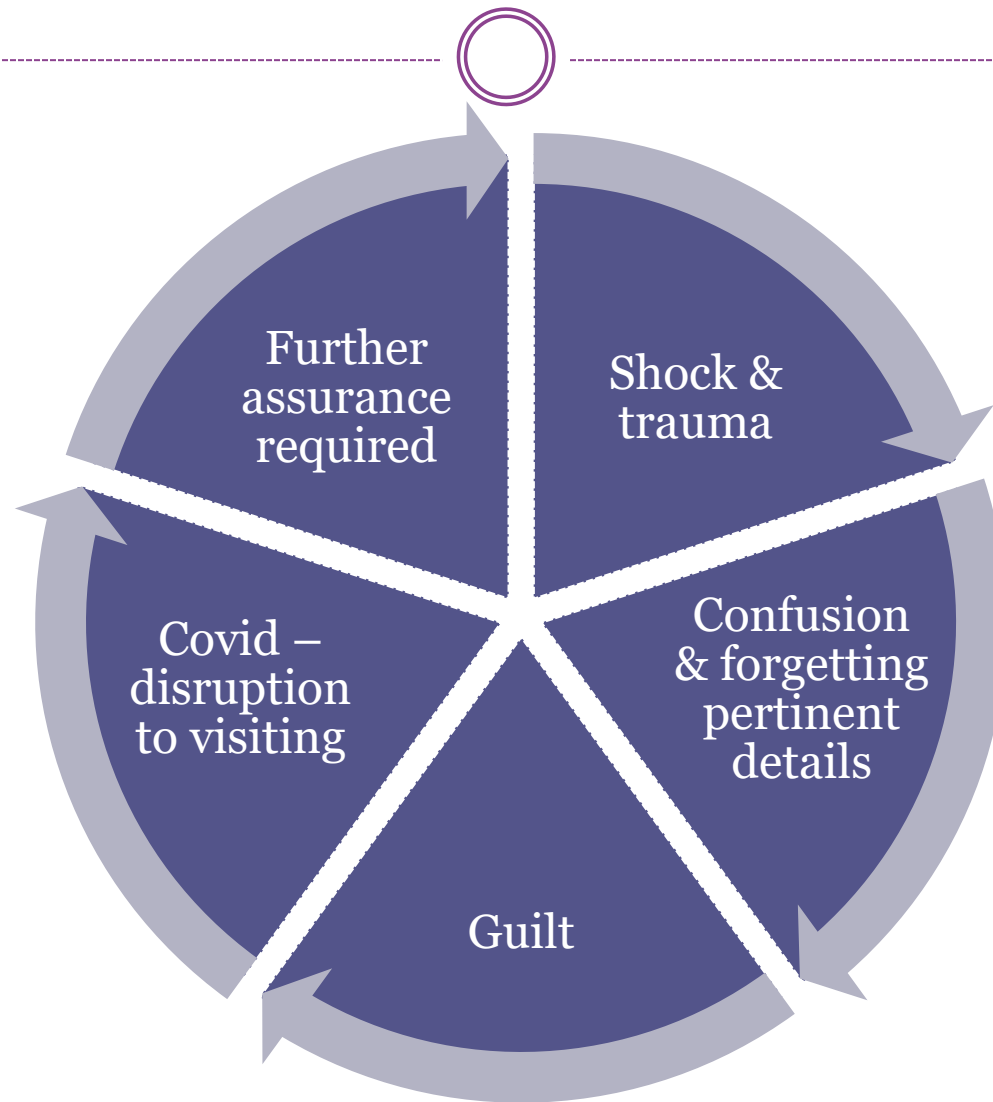
Benefits

- Appropriate contact via dedicated number & email
- Chat to nurse or consultant familiar with case
- Lead nurse available running service
- Provide assurance that cannot be gained elsewhere

Limitations

- Time limitations
- Inconsistencies
- Lack of knowledge of service due to high turnaround of nurses

Common scenarios



Feedback

It was a nice thought to send a card and bereavement details in card

It was so relieving to gain some clarity on my fathers death. I was so worried

The card was gratefully received. It felt respectful and thoughtful

It was nice to chat to a nurse who understood what I have been through

I didn't get to see my mum & dad in person before they died of Covid. It was helpful to gain assurance that they weren't in pain and they died peacefully

I needed advice on counselling contacts for my children and I am glad I got in touch

I was so shocked at the time of my husbands death I had forgotten most of the information I was given. I am so grateful that I could speak to someone to provide me with some clarity

The memory items will be treasured

Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care QI Project



- RIE QI Team Lead: Janine Wilson
- RIE QI Team: Nazir Lone, Caroline Barker, Tina Macleod, Michelle McCool, Jakki Smith, Susan Somerville, Jess O’Keefe, Fiona Walker, Steph Cronin, Juliana Zapatero with sponsorship and guidance from Sarah Gossner and Louise Bell
- GRI QI Team: Joanne McPeake, Vivian Cummings
- Additional Support: Jane Whitehorn, Arlene Norton, Caroline Craig,
- Expert Advisors: Natalie Pattison, Kirsty Boyd, Karen McSorley

Improvement Project Objectives



Plan: “We set out to improve the quality of bereavement care experienced in critical care over a 12 month period by developing and working on what we already do”

