

Access to Care in Perinatal Loss

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Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will:

1. Appreciate the challenges of providing care for perinatal loss in rural and remote settings
2. Understand the importance of cultural factors for families experiencing perinatal loss
3. Know where to find resources to support patients experiencing perinatal loss



Challenges of providing care for perinatal loss in rural and remote settings



Planning for Delivery

Travel to delivery centre for access to:

- Surgical services
- Obstetrics or maternal fetal medicine services
- NICU services

- Travel grant for patients living in Northern Ontario more than 100 km away from services
- Anxiety and psychosocial stress
- Limited support away from home



Access to Diagnostic Services

- Genetic counselling
- Chromosomal testing
- Placental pathology
- Fetal autopsy



Access to After Care

- Lactation support
- Coaching and counselling
- Support for partners, children and others close to the loss
- Loss with multiples
- Pregnancy after loss
- Parental leave following loss



Understand the importance of cultural factors for families experiencing perinatal loss



Case Study – Part I

32 yo G5P4 woman at 14+3 presented to the nursing station with bleeding and cramping

- Turned away because of COVID-19 restrictions
- Returned later that evening with worsening symptoms
- Care partner not allowed to be with her
- Delivered at nursing station



Case Study – Part 2

- Patient distraught and requesting remains for burial
- Indigenous community health representative advocated on woman's behalf
- RN pointed to garbage to find remains



Case Study – Part 3

- Indigenous community health representative brought situation to attention of chief & council
- Mandatory cultural safety training for nurses and non-Indigenous staff at the nursing station



Know where to find resources to support patients experiencing perinatal loss



Resources for Pregnancy & Infant Loss

Provincial	National & International
Bereavement Ontario Network	Children and Youth Grief Network
The Coping Centre	Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Calgary, AB
Pregnancy & Infant Loss Network	Postpartum Support International
Bereaved Families Ontario	After the Loss of Your Baby - BC
	March of Dimes - Loss & Grief
	The Compassionate Friends Canada
	Empty Arms - Saskatchewan



Bereavement Toolkit for Rural Hospitals

Vanessa Mihaljevic, RN M Ed candidate



Conclusions



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- Receiving care in a Level 1 or 2 hospital may limit access to diagnostic testing and support services
- Attention to cultural and linguistic needs of the patient may provide comfort and lessen anxiety
- Virtual perinatal loss groups may increase the support network around the patient
- Kindness and empathy are the most powerful tools we have to support patients during a loss

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Miigwetch!
Thank you!



**Nurture
North**