Child Life in Hospice

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There is no conflict of interest or commercial support for this program.

- VITAS Healthcare is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Texas Nurses Association, an accredited approve by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

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Children’s Grief and Bereavement Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnC3mV6b-ww&autoplay
* **Objectives**

* Describe the role of a child life specialist and services available in hospice.
* Discuss a child’s understanding of grief based on developmental stage.
* Articulate coping mechanisms based on developmental stages.
* Identify signs of indications of poor coping.
* Identify anticipatory grief, legacy building activities and resources.
* Identify and articulate the importance of self care.
As stated on the Child Life Council website:

“Child life specialists are trained professionals with expertise in helping children and their families overcome life’s most challenging events. Armed with a strong background in child development and family systems, child life specialists promote effective coping through play, preparation, education, and self-expression activities. They provide emotional support for families, and encourage optimum development of children facing a broad range of challenging experiences, particularly those related to healthcare and hospitalization.”

- Minimum bachelor’s degree or master’s degree* with specific coursework in human growth and development, family studies, psychology, and related field
- By 2022, all newly Certified Child Life Specialists will be required to hold a master’s degree
- Minimum of 480 hour internship
- Class Taught by CCLS
- Certification examination
- Professional development hours to maintain certification
- Adherence to the code of ethics and standards established by the Child Life Council
Role of a Child Life Specialist

- Play
  * Therapeutic
  * Medical

- Education
- Preparation
- Legacy building
- Community resources

- Support
  * Emotional
  * Procedural
  * Anticipatory Grief
• Child life specialists in the hospice field, work with both adult patients who have children, grandchildren, nieces/nephews, along with terminally ill pediatric patients and their siblings.

• Difference in Medicaid vs Medicare
CCLS services for Both Adult & Pediatric Families

When working with adult patients, child life specialists provide

• Education about the diagnosis and prognosis
• Hospice Process
• Preparation of end of life
• Legacy activities
• Psychosocial emotional support
• Coping skills
• Preparation for the funeral, cremation, memorial, or viewing ceremony.
• Educating parents/ caregivers on typical grief response
• Providing resources
• Education on coping skills
• Providing resources
* The referral process

- Team managers
- Team social workers
- Team Chaplin
- Admission Nurses
- Hospital CCLS
- Other team members
## Developmental Stages

### Piaget's Four Stages of Cognitive Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensorimotor Stage:</td>
<td>Birth to 2 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoperational Stage:</td>
<td>2 to 7 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11–15 years of age through adulthood</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Sensorimotor Stage:**
  - Birth to 2 years of age
  - The infant constructs an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions: progressing from reflexive, instinctual action at birth to the beginning of symbolic thought toward end of the stage.

- **Preoperational Stage:**
  - 2 to 7 years of age
  - The child begins to represent the world with words and images. These words and images reflect increased symbolic thinking and go beyond the connection of sensory information and physical action.

- **Concrete Operational Stage:**
  - 7 to 11 years of age
  - The child can now reason logically about concrete events and classify objects into different sets.

- **Formal Operational Stage:**
  - 11–15 years of age through adulthood
  - The adolescent reasons in more abstract idealistic and logical ways.

*Figure 2.3*
* Education and Preparation

- Beliefs
- Family History
- What the children already know
- What they would like the child life specialist to disclose
- Educate the family on the importance of honest, age appropriate, education and preparation.
- As professionals, we know the importance and benefits of education and preparation, but ultimately it is the parents/caregivers decision.
When providing education and preparing the child/children for upcoming events it is important to:

- Use developmentally appropriate language
- Provide the family with appropriate resources for additional questions that the children may have
- Use bibliotherapy, when appropriate.
- Provide the opportunity for medical play, so the child can explore the health care environment in a way that is appropriate.
  - This also gives you a chance to assess their coping and questions that they have but may not know how to express or ask in any other way other through play.
- Talk about the importance of coping skills, give examples.
These activities foster a sense of connection with the patient and promote coping and feelings of grief and loss.

- Family Pictures
- Memory Bears
- Lock of hair
- Artwork
- 3D Hand/Foot Molds
- Fingerprint medallion Charms
- Scrapbooks
- Ink Handprints/Footprints
- Video or audio Goodbye recordings
- Goodbye Letters from the patient to the family members.
- Recording of Heartbeat
- Songs of Love (pediatric patients only)
- Coordinating Events (wishes, birthdays, special occasions)
**Goodbye Letter**

To: ____________________________

I am saying goodbye because ____________________________

Saying goodbye makes me feel ____________________________

I remember a time when we ____________________________

You taught me ____________________________

Something I want you to know is ____________________________

I will always remember ____________________________

From: ____________________________
Therapeutic play refers to specific activities that are developmentally supportive and assist in the psychosocial and emotional well-being of the child and encourages optimal growth and development.
EXAMPLES:

• Balloon release with letter attached
• Anger releasing activities- Making stress balls
• Self- Expression / Coping skills activities- deep breathing, yoga, coping skills wheel, journaling, grief workbooks.
• Bibliotherapy
• Medical Play
• Grief Workbooks
• Games such as UNO, Question Jena, Dog Gone Grief etc.
• Memory boxes
• Memory books such as the “I Remember Book”
• Painting a picture frame Painting flower pots and planting a flower in memory of their loved one.
• Making a beaded bracelet for each the patient and child. Patient will wear this bracelet when being buried or cremated. The child will frame theirs or keep it in a safe place. This gives them a sense of connection once the loved one is gone.
EMOTION MASKS
Child Life Specialist will provide appropriate Bereavement community based resources for the family in addition to child life bereavement services, such as:

- Community Support Groups
- Grief/Bereavement Camps
- Support Groups
- On-Going Grief Support
- Memorial Services

We are allowed 13 months of bereavement support per family with a frequency that best fits the family's needs.
• Annually
• Recurrent invite
• All family members and friends of the child are welcome to attend
• Butterfly release
• Live music
• Read aloud all pediatric names
• Open ended grief activity
* Pediatric Support Group and Bereavement Camps *

Typical structure of Children’s Support Groups: (1.5-2 hours, 1X MONTH)
• Sign In
• Ice Breaker
• Dinner
• Therapeutic or Legacy Activity
• Balloon Release

Typical structure of Children’s Bereavement Day Camps: (5-6 hours, 1X SUMMER, 1X WINTER/HOLIDAY CAMP)
• Sign In
• Ice Breaker
• Therapeutic or Legacy Activity
• Lunch
• Dance Party!
• Lesson on Grief and Feelings
• Coping Skill Activity
• Snack
• Game
• Balloon Release
What is Bibliotherapy?
  - the use of books, poems, or other forms of literature for therapeutic, educational, or preparation purposes. Bibliotherapy can help explore emotions, coping, questions, and give a sense of normalization.

The Next Place
When Dinosaurs Die
I Miss You
My Many Colored Days
I Wonder What You Do On Your First Day in Heaven
In My Heart
Ida Always
The Yellow Balloon
Invisible Sting
Where do Balloons Go
* Guided Journals & Other Resources

• *Fire in my Heart, Ice in my Veins* by Enid Traisman

• When Someone Dies: A Child-Caregiver Activity Book

• *When Someone Very Special Dies* by Marge Heegaard

• *When Someone Has a Very Serious Illness* by Marge Heegaard

• Art with Heart Journals

• My Wishes

• Voices My Voices

• How I Feel

• Angel Catcher
* The Importance of Self Care!

**Burn Out**

State of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion caused by work related stressors.

Examples of these are,

- Feeling tired most of the time
- Getting sick frequently
- Change in eating and sleep habits
- Frequent sense of failure, self doubt or defeat
- Feelings of detachment
- Loss of motivation
- Decreased satisfaction or sense of accomplishment
- Isolation
- Utilizing negative coping skills
- For more information please visit helpguide.org (under the burnout prevention and recovery tab)
The importance of self care

Self Care Can:
• Prevent overload and burnout
• Reduce stress
• Help you refocus

Examples of self care
• Make a date with yourself
• Praise yourself when doing something AWESOME!
• Make sure and utilize “YOU” time. Take time for a massage, pedicure, gym, vacation, day off.
• Journaling
• Unplug!
• Utilize your coping skills
• Stress Balls
• Children's Grief Book
• Burn out Quiz
*Thank you!

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