

## A condolence letter to support bereaved parents after a child's death

### *Carta de condolencias para apoyar a los padres en duelo después de la muerte de un hijo*

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Dear Editor,

A child's death is a traumatic experience that can put parents at risk for adverse mental and physical health during bereavement. Health professionals can benefit from knowing these risks to best support bereaved parents<sup>1</sup>. Here, we present some considerations for health professionals to support bereaved parents who are grieving a child's death.

Spirituality is a vital dimension of a child's experience at the end of life: providing comfort, support, and a sense of connection. Spiritual care is paramount to address the substantial spiritual distress that may develop<sup>2</sup>. All professionals involved with child deaths should ensure that procedures are in place to support parents, to allow them to say goodbye to their child, to be able to understand why their child died, and to offer the parents follow-up appointments with appropriate healthcare professionals<sup>3</sup>. Kenny et al.<sup>4</sup> noted that the most repeated finding across the 11 papers was the treating hospital's integral role for the bereaved parents. The treating hospital is central in providing support to parents through their child's end-of-life journey and subsequent bereavement<sup>4</sup>. Nursi<sup>5</sup> described the

following condolence letter to support spiritually bereaved parents after a child's death:

"If the world had been eternal, and man was to have remained in it eternally, and separation had been unending; grievous sorrow and despairing woe would have had some meaning. But, since this world is a guesthouse, wherever the dead child has gone, you, and we too, shall go there. Moreover, he is not the only one to die; it is a general highway. And, since separation is not forever, you will meet with him in the future, both in the Intermediate Realm and the hereafter. One should say: "The command is God's. He gave him, and He took him away," and: "All praise be to God for all circumstances," and offer thanks in patience<sup>5</sup>".

"We use the mentioned condolence message in bereaved parents, who lost their children, and we observe great psychosocial relief in many bereaved parents.

In conclusion, we believe that it is important for health professionals to recognize ethnic aspects of spirituality and implement care measures that support families' spirituality with a dead child. We also think that all bereaved parents following a child's death should be supported spiritually.

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Date of reception: 16-10-2020

Date of acceptance: 16-10-2020

DOI: 10.24875/BMHIM.20000316

Available online: 24-02-2021

Bol Med Hosp Infant Mex. 2021;78(1):85-86

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## Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## Funding

None.

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