

Supportive Care for Relatives of Patients Dying in the Intensive Care Setting;

Development of a Toolbox (Project STRIC)

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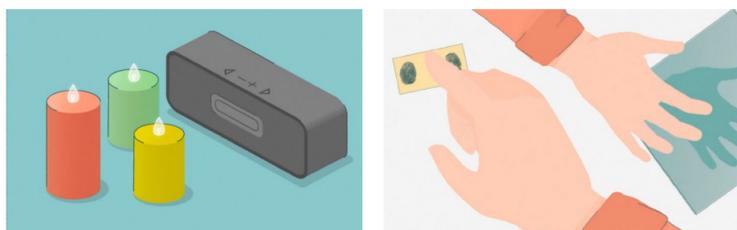
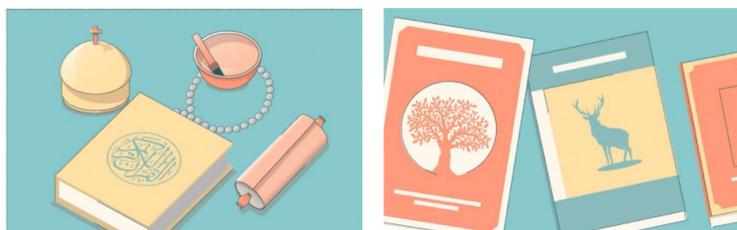
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Introduction

The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is characterised by high tech and absence of intimacy and often lacks a structured palliative care approach for bereavement support for relatives. We developed practical tools for ICU-nurses in the Netherlands to support relatives of dying patients in the ICU.

Methods

1. A multidisciplinary group of professionals, researchers, patient and family representatives, and nursing students.
2. Various methods and resources: end-of-life care guidelines; best practices in ICU's and hospice care; educational needs and preferences of ICU nurses; multicultural aspects of (education in) bereavement care; implementation science.



Results

1. A practical toolbox, adaptable to the needs of relatives, the local ICU context and future trends.

The toolbox includes four themes:

1. Communication advices for nurses (e.g. how to discuss death and dying, and information about cultural and spiritual rituals);
 2. Creating a farewell basket with materials for relatives (with e.g. massage oil, religious writings, and items to make a long-lasting memory, such as a finger print);
 3. Creation of a warm atmosphere in the room (e.g. candle light, comfortable chair, music player); and
 4. Organisation of (after) care (e.g. talking about digital legacy, and about dying at home, organising memorial meetings).
2. Written information and an e-learning for ICU-professionals, including 8 modules on intercultural aspects of death, dying and bereavement.
 3. Guidelines for implementation from orientation to long term use, including various strategies and activities to address (potential) problems and bottlenecks.

Written and digital materials (videos and e-learnings) are stored at the combined website for ICU-professionals and (ex)patients and families on the ICU (<https://fcic.nl/onze-projecten/rouwzorg/>).



Conclusion

This best practice and evidence based toolbox contains practical tools and knowledge on intercultural bereavement support at the ICU. With this toolbox ICU-nurses throughout the Netherlands can learn, use and implement a palliative care approach in bereavement care.

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