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A Host of Golden Daffodils

Warrington ICU Memorial Service – Sophie Liu & Helene Hazzard

Introduction

The death of a loved one in the ICU is often an unexpected and traumatic event (Berry, Brink and Metaxa, 2015).

The idea of the memorial service came from the nursing staff who wanted to show that they remember the patients who have died on the unit and their loved ones long after they have gone.

The service is run by ICU staff and Dr A. Higgs who all provide their time voluntarily and also bake for the service.

The aims of the service is to celebrate their lives and to recognise the courage and dignity of those left behind.

Method

The service is run yearly during spring, where all the relatives of patients who have died on ICU the prior year are invited.

Relatives are asked to personalise a label with a message, memory or photograph. At the service these are then placed on a bunch of daffodils.

Daffodils are chosen as a symbol of spring, rebirth and hope for the future.

The service consists of readings, performances by school children, a piper and a soloist.

Names of all who have sadly passed away the year before are shown on screen, whilst relatives lay their daffodils at the table.

Refreshments and cakes are provided afterwards, and relatives are able to view the memorial book and talk to each other. Staff are available to chat with them.

Conclusions & Discussions

The service has been recognised as thoughtful with a personal touch, many relatives have also commented on the comfort knowing they are not alone in their grief.

Overall the service expresses the care and compassion that the critical care nurses have for patients and relatives, even when they are no longer in critical care.

Feedback has identified the positive impact the service has on relatives and close friends of those who have passed away.

As the memorial service continues to gain positive feedback the Critical Care nurses will continue to run the service yearly.

Key Messages

The feedback received highlights the huge success and positive impact of providing the service. And the importance of supporting relatives of those who have sadly passed away.

Results

98 people attended this year's service which received extremely positive feedback. In 2016 at the trust's Thank you awards we placed 1st in "Team of the Year" and also placed 2nd for "Excellence in innovation, improvement and efficiency".

