

# Introducing a bereavement box to promote better bereavement care for families in the ICU

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## Introduction

Bereavement care is important, yet underdeveloped in English ICUs (Berry, et al., 2017). NICE (2017) stresses the importance of involving the family in the care of their loved one.

Bereaved family members frequently experience depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder which can impact on their quality of life due to sudden or unexpected loss. Yet the Intensive Care Society (1998) outline the standards ICUs should meet for bereavement care – yet it doesn't answer the question of what to offer the bereaved family.

## Our bereavement box contains:

### Keepsake heart key rings

One half is given to the family the other can stay with the patient. It allows the family to know their heart is always with their loved one.

### Hand Printing

Instead of using paint these use carbon paper and inkless wipes. It produces a detailed print which can be utilised to make jewellery at a later point.

### Ribbon for a lock of hair

We have ribbon available to take a small lock of hair as well as organza bags.

### Candles and Speakers

Candles to create an appropriate ambience for end of life care. We also have access to speakers to give us the ability to play music of the families choice as life-sustaining care is withdrawn.

### Forget-me-not seeds and Bereavement cards

We now send a personalised card signed by the staff who have looked after the patient which also contains a small packet of seeds of forget-me-not seeds with a poem attached.

### Fingerprint mould kits

The pack comes with blue and white putty which is mixed together and placed back into the holder. Two fingerprints can then be taken and allowed to solidify.

Families can then contact Memory Treasures to get them made into keepsake jewellery.



## Conclusion

Feedback has been positive, relatives are grateful to have something physical to remember their loved one and have been appreciative of the handmade cards. It is valuable to empower the multidisciplinary team to identify patient's and families' needs and develop appropriate and kind care, ensuring good bereavement care in critical care. Further analysis is needed to measure the impact of the bereavement box in the care perceived by families in ICU.