

The Parent Perspective: Enhancing Trauma-Informed Care by Including Caregivers in Staff Education

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A Deeper Dive into Parent Perspectives!

BACKGROUND



- Trauma-informed care (TIC) acknowledges the importance of understanding each person's life experiences and aims to prevent re-traumatization of patients and staff.
- Despite training and integration of TIC strategies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), nurses reported desire for more meaningful TIC education opportunities.

PURPOSE

The aim of the quality improvement project was to enhance staff engagement with TIC practices through a structured parent discussion panel focused on TIC principles.

METHODS



Plan: Recruit former parents and caregivers whose child was a patient in the NICU. Develop an educational parent discussion panel based on the six principles of TIC (safety, trustworthiness, collaboration, peer support, empowerment, and cultural, historical, and gender issues).

Do: Facilitate an in-person, moderator-guided parent discussion panel for NICU staff.

Study: Distribute post-surveys to assess staff engagement with TIC strategies.

Act: Evaluate survey responses and collaborate with stakeholders to sustain and improve ongoing TIC education.

CONCLUSION



- Integrating parent voices into trauma-informed care education provided a powerful opportunity for staff to better understand the NICU family experience.
- Strong participant support for continuing the parent panel annually highlights the value of this approach.
- Ongoing inclusion of parent perspectives may enhance trauma-informed and family-centered care practices.

OUTCOMES

- A 1-hour panel was facilitated that composed of 12 NICU parents, including staff members.
- TIC focused prompts included:
 - "What actions, words or gestures from staff made you feel most supported?"
 - "What were things (even well intended) that weren't helpful?"
 - "How have your NICU journey shaped you as a healthcare worker today?"

Post-Survey Results:

Variable	Responses	Post-Survey
		n (%)
What is your role?	RN PCT Case manager Other	63 (90%) 1 (1.4%) 1 (1.4%) 5 (7.1%)
Engaging with traumatized families so that they feel comfortable talking to you/ comforted by you.	Not at all confident Somewhat confident Very confident	1 (1.5%) 28 (41.8%) 38 (56.7%)
Responding calmly and without judgement to a family's strong emotional distress.	Not at all confident Somewhat confident Very confident	1 (1.5%) 19 (28.85) 46 (69.7%)
Assessing a family's distress, emotional needs, and support systems.	Not at all confident Somewhat confident Very confident	0 (0.0%) 30 (45.5%) 36 (54.5%)
Offering resources to families based on your assessment of their distress, emotional needs, and support systems.	Not at all confident Somewhat confident Very confident	3 (4.5%) 36 (53.75) 28 (41.8%)
Understanding how traumatic stress may present itself differently in patients of different ages, genders, or cultures.	Not at all confident Somewhat confident Very confident	2 (3.0%) 27 (40.3%) 38 (56.7%)
I am willing to incorporate the principles of trauma-informed care into my daily practice when caring for patients/families.	Yes No I'm not sure	67 (100%) 0 (0.0%) 0 (0.0%)

Please share how the NICU Parent Panel has impacted the way you interact with families.

- "As a nurse, it served as a powerful reminder of the lasting impact we make on our patients and their families. It reinforced how important compassionate communication, presence, and support are during such vulnerable moments in their lives."
- "Hearing parents speak is a good reminder that every interaction we have, whether good or bad, at the bedside can be meaningful to parents and impact their time in the NICU."
- "It was really informative to hear the perspective of NICU parents. Sometimes it is easy to just go through the motions, but listening to them makes you step back as a nurse and think about their feelings and what they are going through."
- "It empowered me to feel more comfortable talking to parents about their feelings about their child's hospitalization/care, whereas before it felt like an elephant in the room that I shouldn't address out of fear that it'd make families uncomfortable or upset."

