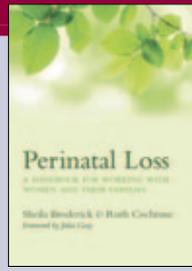


Book review

Perinatal Loss: A Handbook for Working with Women and their Families

Sheila Broderick and Ruth Cochrane
Radcliffe Publishing, 2013
ISBN: 978-1-846199-806
£24.99, paperback



Perinatal Loss is written by a senior women's health counsellor and a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist. The book covers both practical and emotional aspects of caring for bereaved parents and their families. Noting how staff may distance themselves from patients' pain through technical/impersonal language the authors attempt to use personal rather than clinical language throughout the book. Mostly this results in a very readable text although, as a non-medically trained person, I occasionally found myself needing to look up terms. The introduction rightly reminds us of the collective myth that getting pregnant will nearly always result in a live healthy baby and that loss at any gestation, not just those in the third trimester, can be perceived as a devastating event. Whenever

a death occurs parents require a response appropriate to their experience and the book is full of examples of good practice. However, as the authors say, it is important to remember that 'there are no rules' and each person must be treated as an individual. As such the book highlights the importance of good communication, particularly when imparting sad or bad news, and not pre-judging the type of care that is required. Caring for bereaved parents can be physically and emotionally draining and the authors provide a valuable chapter reminding staff about the need for self care. As an important message to managers, the chapter emphasises how the care patients receive is dependent on the quality of the support provided for staff. Just as patients want to feel that they are

individuals, and not just another number, so staff need to feel valued and supported through good information, communication and education. Related to this the final chapter provides helpful ideas for in-house training, particularly around the use of role play.

As a non-medic I found the chapters on 'Types of losses', 'Labour and delivery following a loss', and 'When something goes wrong in labour' particularly informative. Although I profoundly agree with comments about the importance of providing mementos such as certificates, and appropriate rites and rituals, I was tempted to skim through more pastorally focused chapters such as 'Initial reactions to grief' and 'Support for parents after the death'. Those with a more medical background may find the corollary. However, any healthcare professional involved in supporting bereaved parents is likely to find something of value within the book. I therefore highly recommend its reading and its addition to reading lists and department/academic libraries.

Mark Newitt
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infant Focus on a unit

- Is your unit currently undergoing a rebuild or refurbishment?
Has your unit received recognition for excellent practice or is it working towards improvement?
Is your unit overseas? Have you spent time in an overseas NICU? How does practice differ from the UK?
Are you using or in the process of choosing cutting-edge equipment?
Has your unit been involved in a unique fund-raising event?

Reflections on a trip to Rukungiri, Uganda

Earlier this October I travelled to Rukungiri in southern Uganda with a medical mission... The trip was a unique opportunity to see how healthcare is delivered in a resource-poor setting...

A new beginning in Norwich

Following a move from the city centre to a purpose-built hospital building in Norwich, the new Health and Social Care Centre has opened its doors... The new building offers a more modern and spacious environment for patients and staff...



Image of a person in a clinical setting

Developing a new identity at Royal Bolton

By November 2010, after a lengthy consultation, the local Committee of Primary Care Trusts decided to merge with a tertiary paediatric and maternity trust... The new identity reflects the trust's commitment to providing high-quality care for its patients...



Image of a group of people in a clinical setting



Image of a person in a clinical setting