
Paediatric Sepsis: Co-designing a Peer Mentoring Program

Initiative Type

Model of Care

Status

Deliver

Added

08 March 2022

Last updated

28 June 2022

URL

<https://clinicaexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/paediatric-sepsis-co-designing-peer-mentoring-program>

Summary

The Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program Peer Mentor Program (PMP) has been codesigned and developed in response to feedback from families with a child diagnosed with sepsis (surviving and bereaved). These parents and carers identified feeling isolated during and after their child's hospital admission, and that this sense of isolation was amplified by the lack of understanding and information

about sepsis within the community. These families sought validation and normalisation of their experience and a need to connect with others who had a level of understanding of their experience. The PMP is co-designed by consumers and delivered by consumers. It aims to provide families with the unique understanding, encouragement, and support which only another parent or carer who has walked a similar path can provide. Development of the PMP has been collaborative and considered, involving key stakeholders and our consumers, with guidance from The Australian Centre for Social Innovation. This has ensured establishment of a valued and sustainable program with formalised recruitment, onboarding, training and supervision components. Peer Mentors have first-hand experience with the challenges and adjustment faced by mentees and hence can “walk alongside” the mentee, assisting them to navigate the sepsis journey. Mentors provide reassurance to mentees, normalisation of their experience, understanding of their grief and trauma and information about helpful services and resources. Parents whose child had sepsis more than two years previously, surviving and bereaved, are eligible to apply to become a Peer Mentor. The PMP is available across the state on an online platform to ensure equity of access and mentors communicate using calls, video calls and emails.

Key dates

Dec 2020

Nov 2021

Implementation sites

Queensland Children's Hospital

Partnerships

Consumers, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI), CHQ Bereavement Services, St Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital USA

Key Contacts

Kate Weller

2339

Manager, Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program

Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service

07b30681593

Kate.Weller@health.qld.gov.au

Aim

To provide families with a child diagnosed with sepsis (surviving and bereaved) with opportunities for connection with others, validation and normalisation of their experience.

Benefits

Mentees develop an increased sense of confidence and wellbeing, problem solving ability, adaptive coping, sense of social support and acceptance of their situation when being assisted by consumer (peer) mentors.

Background

Literature suggests that peer support in health is a valued and unique form of assistance not typically met by the formal service systems.

Solutions Implemented

Peer Mentor Program – two components: a) for families with a child with sepsis b) bereaved families, due to sepsis

Evaluation and Results

There are currently no other paediatric sepsis specific peer mentor programs available in Australia, or the world that we are aware of. The type of support offered within the QPSP PMP is unique in that it is provided by consumers. Their lived-experience and capacity to “walk alongside” new families is a type of support not able to be met by clinicians.

All Mentors who attended the training program indicated an increased level of confidence and competence following the training day and a high to very high level of confidence that the program structure would ensure the safety and wellbeing of mentors and mentees.

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