

Spiritual health promotion-the application of picture books in spiritual care for children with cancer and their families

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Background and objective

Hospitalized children with cancer and their parents often fall into anxiety, depression, and anger. They are overwhelmed by the unknown future, lose sense of meaning in life, and have spiritual distress. Spiritual health requires our ability to discover and articulate our own basic purpose in life, learn to experience love, joy, peace, and fulfillment and help others and ourselves achieve full potential (Caroline Young and Cyndie Koopsen, 2011). Spiritual counselors use picture books to promote spiritual health of children and parents, so that their focus is no longer only on the disease, but the realization of the meaning of life.

Methods/Intervention

"Picture books" have a positive impact on children's emotional, social, cognitive, language learning, and imaginative development (Huang Hwei-Ling, 2005), and relieve children's sadness and frustration in illness:

1. Parent-Child Reading

- (1) Provide various picture books processed by the ultraviolet sterilizer for parents to borrow.
- (2) Teach parents to read picture books for children, and thus enhance parent-child relationship.

2. Volunteer Reading

- (1) Train students from Child Care Department to read picture books.
- (2) After volunteer service in ward, the counselor discusses with them. together.



Results

- 1. Children:** break away from the "only" medical situation, inject rich stories and imagination, feel the beauty of the story situation, and forget the pain, relieve discomfort.
- 2. Parents:** Parent-Child Reading gives parents a sense of meaning in their efforts. There is more fun and laughter in parent-child interaction. Picture books also help parents sort out their heavy emotions and get comfort, healing and peace; volunteer reading gives parents a chance to rest, and have space to deal with personal affairs.
- 3. Student volunteer:** The student felt that their abilities had been developed when they volunteered in the picture book reading service. Some learned to support and cope with others. Some students saw the needs and difficulties of patients, and learned to respect life more, and had more empathy and understanding for people. In the interaction with parents, some students also learn to listen to the plight of others. Most of the students thought that this kind of participation was very meaningful and with achievement.
- 4. Medical staff:** During the co-reading of the picture book, the medical staff had more topics to interact with parents. The medical environment became warmer and more harmonious, and everyone's body and soul were healed.

Conclusions/Lessons Learned

Spirituality is the foundation of human nature. It is related to a person's beliefs, views on the meaning of existence, connection with others, connection with higher power, source of hope, etc. There were once parents of a child with a rare disease who read picture books to their child. Although they still felt sad, they had the strength to transcend difficulties, because they had a sense of meaning through reading for their child.

Relevance to HPH

The spiritual counselor helps children, parents, student volunteers and medical staff recover their internal strength through picture books, and thus people involved create a warm medical environment together.