

**Title:** Integrated Bereavement: A Comprehensive Approach to Pediatric Loss

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**Statement of the Problem:** Providing comprehensive bereavement services to families who have been affected by the death of a child is critical to the long-term health of the family unit. Wake and surrounding counties in NC do not currently offer these services.

**Purpose:** To conduct a needs assessment to inform the development of a comprehensive, evidence-based bereavement program for families affected by the death of a child, to be implemented at Transitions LifeCare (TL) in Raleigh, NC.

**Background:** Existing literature demonstrates an increased focus on bereavement care prior to, immediately after, and in subsequent years following the death of a child. With higher rates of depression for bereaved parents, it follows that more effective bereavement support leads to better outcomes for families. These families require longitudinal, interdisciplinary, multi-faceted support.

**Methods:** An online survey was developed to query 30 local providers (MDs/DOs/APNs/RNs/SWs/M.Divs selected based on population served) from TL and local children's hospitals (WakeMed/Duke/UNC-CH). Survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions informed by literature review as well as the National Consensus Guidelines for Clinical Practice. Field expert reviews were performed March 2018, with final survey sent out April 2018 with follow-up reminder sent May 2018. Survey results were reviewed using descriptive statistics June 2018.

**Results:** 23 providers (76%) responded, with 100% agreeing this type of grief was protracted and unpredictable, requiring a specialized team to provide bereavement support. 57% of respondents found bereavement support in their local community to be inadequate/poor with 100% of respondents disagreeing with current standards of practice in bereavement care.

**Conclusions:** Current bereavement services within local communities are not providing the type of support local providers deem to be most effective. Results of the assessment will be used to inform the development of a comprehensive, evidence-based bereavement program for use at TL.