

Enhanced Communication & Care Planning:

Responding, Supporting, and Planning with Families in the NICU using a Communication Tracking Tool



PRESENTER:
Emily Kieran MB, BCh, BAO, MRCPI, PhD
emily.kieran@cw.bc.ca

BACKGROUND

- Families with infants in the NICU face uncertainty and significant stress
- Enhanced communication between medical staffs & families shown to:
 - Improve parental coping
 - Facilitate better understanding
- No standardized approach for staffs to elicit and understand family's values and incorporate them into care planning

OBJECTIVE

To provide a **consistent, family-oriented**, and **value-based** care planning pathway by adapting and implementing a standardized **Communication Tracking Tool**

METHODS

Phase 1

Environmental Scan

Survey

- To identify families that would benefit from enhanced communication approach
- To determine challenges in the current care planning and communication pathway

Phase 2

Tool Development, Evaluation, and Implementation

Focus Group

- To review the new Communication Tracking Tool

Working Group

- To trial the tool with multi-disciplinary NICU clinicians
- To perform force field analysis of what is working well, what are the gaps, and what may be hindering optimization

The Communication Tracking Tool can improve **communication pathway** between medical staff in the NICU and provide **consistency** and increased **transparency** of parents' values and goals to facilitate upcoming conversations

COMMUNICATION TRACKING TOOL

Name of baby: _____ Primary Tracker(s): _____
Name of parents: _____
Preferred language: _____

Indicators for increased need for communication (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Predicted/expected duration in NICU >6 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents* and clinical team's goals are different
<input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain diagnosis/ prognosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents differ about care plan/goals of care
<input type="checkbox"/> Not following predicted trajectory	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents cannot talk about the "what ifs"
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple teams	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial/social stressors
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents unfamiliar with health care system	<input type="checkbox"/> English not a primary language
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural aspects:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other reason

Significant Communication (ie. Family team meeting, review of tests...):

Name	Discipline	Date	Disclosure

Family Values
If your baby becomes sicker, what are your most important goals?

☐ Spend time with people that love him/her
☐ Be in less medicalized environment (less interventions/tests, hospice, or home)
☐ Be physically comfortable
☐ Live as long as possible

Notes: _____

What are your biggest fears or worries about the future with your baby's condition/illness?

☐ Suffering ☐ Financial difficulties ☐ Extent/burden of care ☐ Preparing for death
☐ Neuro-disability ☐ Family stress ☐ Going home ☐ The unknown
☐ Physical disability

Notes: _____

What gives you strength as you think about your baby's illness/condition and the future?

☐ Family ☐ Social Work ☐ Spirituality: _____ ☐ Limited support
☐ Friends ☐ In-ward psychologist ☐ Culture: _____ ☐ Described no support
☐ Other: _____

Notes: _____

How much have you shared with your other children and your extended family/supports about your baby's condition/illness and what might be ahead?

☐ Does not want family informed
☐ Some discussion, wants help talking to other children/family
☐ Some discussion but incomplete
☐ Extensive discussion – ongoing
☐ Wants clinician to talk to children/family

Notes: _____

If your baby becomes sicker, what are you willing to explore for the possibility of gaining more time?

☐ Be on maximum medical support Notes: _____ Date Updated: _____
☐ Undergo tests and procedures
☐ Be uncomfortable
☐ Remain in hospital

Plan and next steps in communication support:

Purpose

- 1) Identify families who need enhanced communication
- 2) Track documentation of specific information/disclosures the medical team has shared
- 3) Summarize the family's values, wishes, and worries regarding the care of their baby
- 4) Streamline information sharing within the medical team



Take a picture to access the full poster, Communication Tracking Tool, and the Serious Illness Conversation Guide – Pediatrics.

<https://qrgo.page.link/Dgxzr>

Figure 1. Truncated version of the Communication Tracking Tool

Emily A. Kieran^{1, 3}, Camara van Breemen^{3, 4}, Mimi T.Y. Kuan^{1, 3}, Esther J. Lee^{2, 3, 4}

1 BC Women's Hospital, 2 BC Children's Hospital, 3 University of British Columbia, 4 Canuck Place Children's Hospice, Vancouver BC, Canada

