

Scripted Role Play #3

Sudden Loss of Family Member

Background: The bereavement coordinator is talking to the wife of a patient who passed away several months ago.

Provider: Good afternoon. I'm Rachel Rogers, the bereavement coordinator at Mercy Hospital. I wanted to come and talk to you about your husband, Manuel. First and foremost, I really want to express my deepest sympathies to you and your family for Manuel's death. I understand it was unexpected and quite sudden.

Esposa: Sí.

Provider: I often meet with families who suffer the loss of a loved one to discuss some of the feelings associated with loss and really just to check in and see how you're doing. Since the length of the bereavement process depends entirely on each individual, some family members are more willing to speak about their feelings sooner than others. Please know that it may take months or even years until you are willing or able to speak openly about Manuel and his passing. I have a few questions I would like to ask you, but before I begin, is there anything you would like to talk about?

Esposa: No

Provider: OK. Can you tell me more about what happened?

Esposa: Bueno, el vino al hospital con mucho dolor. Tenía tanto dolor. Nunca lo había visto así. Él se quejaba de una terrible cantidad de dolor aquí [sobándose el abdomen]. Bueno, llegamos a la sala de emergencia, y empezaron a hacerle varias pruebas para ver qué tenía. Le dieron narcóticos para calmar el dolor porque le dolía demasiado. Los doctores decidieron ingresarlo para tenerlo en observación; yo me quería quedar con él pero no me dejaron porque dijeron que no se permitían visitas en esa unidad. Luego mi hijo mayor vino al hospital a verme y me llevó a su casa para pasar la noche. No pude dormir ahí porque estaba muy preocupada por Manuel. Me quedé despierta y al amanecer le pedí a mi hijo que me llevara de regreso al hospital para estar con él. Cuando llegamos a su cuarto, todas las enfermeras me dijeron que el dolor había bajado y que se veía mejor. Después de eso, nos dejaron verlo y quedamos ahí esperando los resultados de todas las pruebas que le hicieron. De repente, una de las maquinas comenzó a sonar y llegaron muchos doctores y

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enfermeras. Uno de ellos se nos acercó y nos llevó fuera del cuarto para que pudieran atender a Mamuel. Me explicaron algo pero no sé que dijeron porque estaba muy asustada con lo que estaba pasando. Se podía ver un poquito de lo que estaba pasando en el cuarto y a todas las personas que estaban alrededor de él. Le pusieron la cosa esa que usan para resucitar al paciente. Honestamente, no se cuánto tiempo pasaría. Esperé allí con mi hijo y no sabíamos que estaba pasando porque todo fue muy rápido. Después de eso me dijeron que él se había muerto.... que no pudieron salvarlo.

Provider: Again, Martha, I'm terribly sorry for your loss. While I didn't know him, I'm certain that you loved him very much...that your whole family loved him very much. I'd like to ask how you are. Sometimes family members tell me that they are unable to eat or sleep after the loss of a loved one. What about you, Martha. Are you eating and sleeping OK?

Esposa: Sí.

Provider: That's good. I know it can be difficult. Is there anything that is bothering you in particular?

Esposa: Bueno, una pregunta que tengo es que ya no puedo recordar las cosas. Se me olvida todo y luego mis hijos se molestan conmigo porque dicen que no estoy poniendo atención y se cansan de repetir las cosas. No sé qué me está pasando pero les explico que no lo hago a propósito. Peleamos así todo el tiempo y me siento mal.

Provider: Well, Martha, forgetfulness is common after a traumatizing event. It's our body's way of healing itself because it's trying to erase the pain and suffering.

Esposa: ¿Siempre va a ser así? Se me olvida donde dejo las llaves o que tengo ropa en la lavadora. No me puedo concentrar en nada y ando toda despistada.

Provider: While what you describe is common, it depends on the individual just how long it lasts. You will not be like this forever, Martha. You need time to heal. Is there anything else you would like to talk about today, Martha?

Esposa: No.

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Provider: I'm aware of some programs that offer support groups. Would you be interested in something like that?

Esposa: No lo sé.

Provider: Well, if I understand correctly, you do not have a strong support system in the area, and much of your family is still in Bolivia. Sometimes it helps to talk about your feelings, and that is what a support group can offer you – a place to talk. Here is a pamphlet in Spanish about some of the programs in your area. If you decide you're interested, you can call and make arrangements to attend. You wouldn't have to go to every meeting; only when you feel like talking would help. I believe they might have some support groups in Spanish, too.

Esposa: Está bien. . . .

Provider: Unless there's anything else, that's all I wanted to discuss with you today. Like I said, I just wanted to check in and see how you were doing. I appreciate you coming in to see me. You can call me anytime you'd like to talk. Here is my number. Just leave me a message with your name and say, "Spanish", and I will return your call with an interpreter.

Esposa: Está bien, gracias. . . .

Provider: Thank you, Martha.