

May 28-29, 2018
London, UK

J Healthc Commun 2018, Volume 3
DOI: 10.4172/2472-1654-C1-006

PHYSICIANS AND NURSES GRIEVE TOO—LOSS, GRIEF AND MOURNING

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There is lack of direction when it comes to physicians and nurses coping with their own grief connected with the loss of a patient. It is unprofessional to cry or show too much emotion. The textbook of medicine teaches students to distance themselves and create protective boundaries. Being emotional is a sign a weakness. This approach is impractical and damaging. Physicians and nurses are human and experience feelings of helplessness, guilt, uncertainty, isolation, disappointment, and depression after the death of a patient. These feelings can lead to medical errors and burnout if not addressed. There is limited literature that explores physicians' responses to the death of a patient. Research shows that most people can recover from loss

on their own through the passage of time if they have helpful strategies and social support. Working in the health profession can be very challenging. How do nurses and physicians deal with the loss of their patients without getting burned out? Are nurses and physician lacking empathy and compassion? There is a need to have a better understanding of empathy development in the health profession and more education on how to improve the situation. Caring for dying patients can put a lot of stress on nurses and physicians and this can cause them to burn out or quit. I would like to educate the healthcare industry on how to cope with the loss of their patients, co-workers and their loved ones.

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