



Grief and Bereavement Seminar Goes Global

by Gary Logan

FOR A PEDIATRICIAN, sharing bad news, like the diagnosis of an incurable disease or the death of a patient, can be an extremely nerve-wracking experience.

“If you don’t know how to do it, or you resist the opportunity and distance yourself, it’s a very stressful experience,” says Janet Serwint, director of Johns Hopkins pediatrics residency program. “These educational sessions give physicians in training a structure and basis for sharing bad news, which is part of the journey we walk with patients and parents.”

Serwint refers to the daylong annual grief and bereavement workshop she’s been directing at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center for the past 22 years, thanks to funding from the Cameron Kravitt Foundation, founded by two parents who lost their son at birth. Over the years, the program’s popularity has attracted residency programs at other academic medical institutions, including Weill Cornell in 2007 and, this past April, the University of California, San Francisco. Now Serwint is taking that agenda across the Atlantic to Great Britain and pediatricians in training there.

“We have the same problem with bereavement communication in the United Kingdom as in the United States—it is difficult to get it right without experience, and getting it wrong can produce a lifetime of distress for bereaved parents,” says Richard Brown of the East of England School of Paediatrics.

The curriculum for the United Kingdom workshop, planned for Oct. 11 at the University of Cambridge, was co-developed by Serwint and pediatrician Lorene Rutherford. “Hundreds of residents have experienced this seminar,” says Serwint, “and now even more will be able to participate thanks to the Cameron Kravitt Foundation.” 🌟



Jason and Beverly Kravitt

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