



## Project REBUILD: A Collaborative Effort between Assisi Hospice & Lien Centre for Palliative Care

### Second Professional Forum

## How Do We Care For Children & Teenagers in Grief and Bereavement?

**Date** : 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2011 (Saturday)  
**Time** : 9:00am to 12:00pm  
**Venue** : **KK Women's & Children's Hospital**  
**Training Centre, Level 1, Women's Tower**  
**(Beside MacDonald's)**  
**100 Bukit Timah Road**  
**Singapore 229899**

*Co-organized by*



**Children's  
Cancer  
Foundation**

**Club Rainbow (Singapore)**



*Venue sponsored by*



**KK Women's and  
Children's Hospital**  
SingHealth

Please **RSVP** for the free forum via fax, telephone, or email by **18<sup>th</sup> October 2011**.  
Tel: 6347 6232 / 6436 Fax: 6258 3022 Email: [joedward@assisihospice.org.sg](mailto:joedward@assisihospice.org.sg)  
*Places/seats are limited and are on a first-come first-serve basis*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_ MCR / CNE No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel/HP: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*CME/CNE points pending*

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **Presentations**

*PLAY ON: Working with bereaved children and teenagers*

*Speaker: Dr Alicia Pon*

This presentation introduces you to the PLAY ON model in supporting children or adolescents when their loved ones are dying or have died. It will provide examples and interventions that will help adults to understand the experience of a child or adolescent; to know what support they need and how to meet those needs in a playful and meaningful way. The current body of research on children and grief advises a policy of honesty and inclusion when supporting children living with dying and death, however, many parents and health care professionals are unsure of what to do, how to help since there is no way to stop the death or to make it less emotionally painful. This presentation hopes to provide information on how best to support a child through this difficulty and emotional stage of their lives.

*Grief and Bereavement Work with Children and Teenagers in Singapore*

*Speaker: Mrs Saradha Ramachandran*

When death takes place in children's life, change from stability that was established prior to the death takes place. Grief is a common reaction experienced by children during this period of time. It is also the period of attending to the changes, making adjustments and bringing about normalcy, predictability, familiarity and control in the children's life. The presentation would focus on experiences of the children following the death, and ways of supporting the children during the period of bereavement.

*'Moral Distress' Among Healthcare Professionals Working with Children and Adolescents*

*Speaker: Dr Chong Poh Heng*

Dying children is certainly not a common occurrence. It is counter to the course of nature and is commonly described as the worse pain ever that a parent has to bear. Most of these children die in hospitals, often in the intensive care unit, hooked to machines, succumbed despite prolonged aggressive treatment. The professionals who care for them empathize with these parents. They not only bear witness but also share the pain that envelopes with each little life lost. What has been increasingly recognized though is the moral distress among the same medical personnel, as they fight to keep some of the other unfortunate children alive.

### **Panel Discussion**

*A Medical-Psychosocial Perspective of Working with Bereaved Children and Teenagers*

*Chair: Mr Ivan Woo*

*Panelists: Dr Chong, Dr Pon and Mrs Ramachandran*

Children and teenagers tend to adopt worldviews that are unfamiliar to most adults. These worldviews differ from one child to another and are more flexible to change as they develop cognitively over time. In bereavement, children and teenagers tend to struggle with the need to incorporate their losses into their changing worldviews. Their struggles can be manifested in the form of medical and psychosocial symptoms, creating a set of challenges for helping professionals. This panel discussion provides a platform to discuss possible strategies to manage these challenges.

## **ABOUT THE SPEAKERS**

**Dr Chong Poh Heng**, Deputy Medical Director, HCA Hospice Care, is a consultant palliative physician with a special interest in paediatric palliative care. He is also the programme director of Star PALS (Paediatric Advanced Life Support), an alliance between KK Hospital and HCA Hospice Care, a VWO which provides palliative and end of life care to adult patients at home. Star PALS is a multi-disciplinary service that supports children with life limiting diseases and their families across different settings, whether it is the home or the hospital.

**Dr Alicia Pon**, Lecturer, Research Fellow and Clinical Therapist completed her graduate education at the University of Hong Kong. Currently in private practice, Dr. Pon provides psychotherapy for individuals and families with social, psychological and emotional difficulties. With the University of Hong Kong, Dr. Pon serves as an Honorary Lecturer and Research Fellow where she lectures and supervises undergraduate and post graduate students in the fields of child and adolescent mental health, thanatology, play therapy, counselling and psychotherapy. As a researcher, Dr Pon has research and publications on play therapy, palliative care, trauma, and attachment and adoption issues. She has also delivered a number of conference presentations and conducts workshops and training on a variety of topics around the Asia Pacific region.

**Mrs Saradha Ramachandran**, Senior Counsellor, Help Every Lone Parent Family Service Centre (HELP FSC) has a Masters in Applied Psychology and Psychological Services and the Specialist Diploma in Satir's Systemic Transformational Therapy Model. She is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist of the Grief Recovery Institute, USA. She has many years of helping single parents and their children cope effectively with changes in the family circumstances due to the death of the spouse/parent. She has been involved in workgroups of Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports and National Council of Social Services on issues of single-parent families.

**Mr Ivan Woo**, Project Coordinator for Project REBUILD, is Senior Medical Social Worker, Department of Care and Counselling, Tan Tock Seng Hospital. He is also a PhD candidate with the Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore. With a Master of Philosophy from the University of Hong Kong and a Bachelor of Social Sciences in social work from the National University of Singapore, Ivan is also a registered social worker with the Singapore Association of Social Workers and a certified thanatologist with the Association for Death Education and Counselling (ADEC). His interest is in health social work and his area of specialisation is in grief and bereavement.