

CARDIOLOGY 2025



I HAVE CARED FOR THIS
CHILD BUT IT DIDN'T TURN
OUT WELL:
PHYSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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HOPE. HEAL. LEARN.



NO CONFLICTS OR DISCLOSURES

PHYSICIAN GRIEF

- Patient family grief is expected
- Practitioner grief is controversial
 - During interactions with families, we need to stay composed
 - Often feel that we need “permission” to grieve
 - Grief is particularly difficult in pediatric care
 - Can make one question one’s personal mission
- Complicating factors
 - Diagnostic uncertainty
 - Medical complexity
 - If family goals do not align with the practitioners understanding of child’s best interest

PHYSICIAN GRIEF

- Personal attachment to family and child
- Can feel helpless when we can't fix the problem
- Can develop compassion fatigue when there are multiple episodes (ICU)
- Feelings of guilt
- Insufficient support for caregivers
- Can affect future decision-making for other patients



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physician grief, pediatrics

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Children's Hospital
of Philadelphia
Cardiac Center

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a bright red heart shape. The person is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt. The background is blurred.

There is no formula for how you grieve...

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Hey Dr Cohen, I was
wondering if you can write
me a script for medical
marijuana.

No Z, I will not do that. You
are on a lot of medications so
you might have side effects
from marijuana.

Hey Dr Cohen, what condoms
are the best to buy?

Hey Z, all are safe to use but
remember to use them EVERY
TIME and I am glad to hear
that you are being safe!

SHARE YOUR
GRIEF W/COLLEAGUES

LEARN
FROM YOUR
MISTAKES

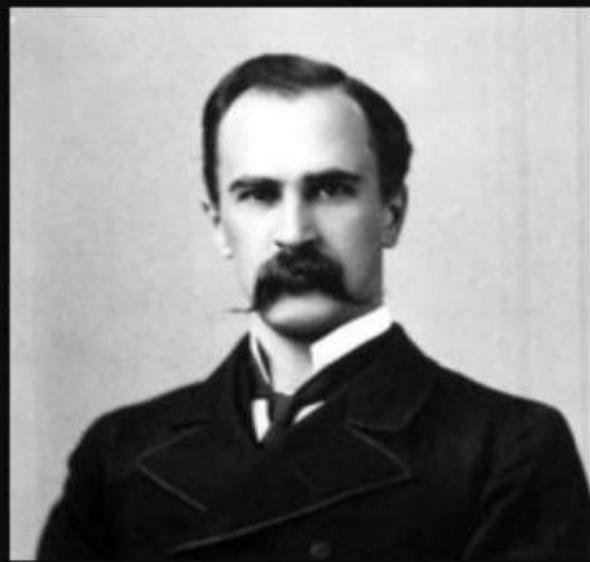
Assess the process,
not the outcome

TRY TO FORGIVE
YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Be prepared for the
unexpected

**STRONG PARTNERSHIP
WITH PATIENT FAMILIES**

BE HONEST ABOUT
AND SHARE
YOUR ERRORS



The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.

~ William Osler

We can't fix everything

But we should still try...

HOPE. HEAL. LEARN.