



Steps in Organizing a Share Companion Program

Purpose:

Peer support has been utilized in Primary Health Care settings, Public and Mental Health and in Bereavement Care. Recovery is not solely based on what clinicians can do, but what an individual can do for themselves and each other. Peer support demonstrates recovery, gives hope and guidance to someone going through a similar situation. The Share organization has used this model of care to support their mission, to provide support toward a positive resolution of grief during the loss of a baby.

Process:

The following steps can be used as a guideline in the implementation of a Companion Program:

1. Identify and establish the role of the Companion Coordinator/Bereavement Coordinator
 - Responsible for orientation and integration of the Companion into the defined role
 - Provide a Position Description that defines the role and responsibilities of the Companion
 - Maintain a record or data collection system for Companion hours
 - Coordinator to orientate facility staff on the companion role
2. Identify Companions
 - Bereaved parent active in a support group or in the community
 - Minimum of 18 months – 2 years from their own personal loss
 - Parent has exhibited a healthy integration of their loss into their life
 - Willingness and availability to volunteer
3. Education and Training Requirements for Companions
 - Attend Sharing and Caring or Caring Companion training offered through the National Share office
 - Complete facility's volunteer orientation process
 - Comply with all HIPAA and confidentiality policies
 - Shadow the Coordinator for the first 2-3 visits
4. Communication with Facility Leadership
 - Clinical leadership in agreement with policies/orientation
 - Supply of Share materials available
 - Coordinator to work with Volunteer coordinator to establish guidelines on the companions volunteer role at the facility
 - Share Chapter agreement in place/dues paid
5. Establish a Call System
 - Determine availability of the Companions and the best system to ensure accessibility
 - Coordinator maintains an updated Companion List
 - Coordinator remains accessible for the Companion during and after a visit

6. Ongoing Companion Communication

- Direct communication with the coordinator throughout the Companionship process
- Document volunteer hours with each visit and time spent for Aftercare support
- Companion to attend/assist with support group meetings
- Coordinator to provide educational updates for the Companion

The mission of Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss, Inc. (Share) is to serve those whose lives are touched by the tragic death of a baby through pregnancy loss, stillbirth or in the first few months of life. The primary purpose is to provide support toward a positive resolution of grief experienced at the time of/or following the death of a baby. The secondary purpose is to provide information, education, and resources on the needs and rights of bereaved parents and siblings. The objective is to aid those in the community, including families, caregivers and professionals, and others in supportive roles.