



Project Number: 2016-1-RO01-KA203-024630

Communicating with Parents

Case Study: Content/dosage of information

Problem addressed: content/dosage of information

Soft skill: **Emotional intelligence, empathy; expressive communication, persuasion**

Method: **Case study, case-based learning**

Part of the consideration of content/dosage of information is evaluating how the information may be perceived. Is there a risk a person may be hypersensitive or “allergic” to certain information? Complications may occur if this is not considered in advance.

A 26 year old, 28 weeks pregnant woman underwent ultrasound examinations. The physician who performed the final examination informed the woman that the fetus had a lethal brain malformation. Birth was then induced prematurely not only in accordance with the mother’s wishes, but also because it was considered to give the child a better prognosis. After birth, the child’s condition improved much more positively than anticipated. The woman, however, strongly expressed that she wanted treatment to be withheld. The physician thought this was unethical. He felt he had a duty to save the life of the child. All the people involved experienced great difficulty in communicating with the mother.

In this case the discussion concluded that the absolute and pessimistic content of information given to the woman before birth could have induced or strengthened her feeling of hopelessness and rejection of the baby. If the ultrasound findings had been presented with reservation reflecting the uncertainty which always is associated with this kind of information, the mother might more easily have accepted treatment of her child. The prognosis of the child seemed to be so good, it would have been wrong not to treat the child actively. The CEC concluded that the mother needed support when treatment of the child was continued against her wish.

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