



Bed Rest/Bed Stress: Support Group for Antepartum Women

Susan Remy, LICSW and Kimberly Rosen, RN

Introduction/Problem

The antepartum inpatient unit on 6 Stoneman is an 18 bed unit for women admitted with a complication during their pregnancy. Often these women are in the hospital for weeks, even months. They usually are not feeling sick and are often bored and anxious. They may be separated from young children and their partners for the first time. Kim Rosen, RN, an Obstetrics nurse, was asked by a patient in 2005, "Are there any other women here like me???" We then discussed having a weekly support group for these women.

Initially there was concern from the nursing team regarding confidentiality and comparison of each patient's individual medical care amongst the patients. There was also the practical logistics of getting the women to the group if they were on very strict bedrest. This issue has lessened as the philosophy around strict bed rest has changed since 2005.

Aim/Goal

The goal was to decrease the isolation women often feel when they are hospitalized on the antepartum unit. An additional goal was for women to offer mutual support to each other since they all had one thing in common: their pregnancies.

The Team

- Susan Remy, LICSW, Obstetrics and NICU Social Worker
- Kimberly Rosen, RN, Obstetrics Registered Nurse

The Interventions

- The drop-in group meets weekly on Thursdays from 11-12 noon.
- Confidentiality rules are explained at the beginning of each group:
 - The information shared is confidential although participants can talk about "themes", e.g., food, boredom, inability to go out for fresh air.
 - If a patient returns the following week the co-leaders are not able to inform patients about the status of a fellow group member, i.e., delivered, discharged etc.
- If a patient wants to participate but is unwilling to get out of bed, we often host the group in that patient's room and the other women sit around the "hosting" patient in the bed.

Results/Progress to Date

Numerous women have made lasting friendships through this group. Many have reconnected if their newborn is admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Some have continued after their baby is discharged and arrange play dates in the community.

Although the group is one hour in length, sometimes the women stay longer and continue to share their stories and resources. They also sometimes get together to watch a movie or go for a walk around the Obstetrics unit. We have had ice cream sundae parties as well as holiday hot cocoa and cookie gatherings.

Many women have reflected that the group has provided a hopeful perspective when they were feeling discouraged and alone. Many have found a common thread with other women, i.e., having multiples, struggling with being away from their children, a diagnosis in common that they thought no one else had except them.

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