

Practical strategies can ease death notification in the ER

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(HealthDay) -- By using practical strategies based on available literature, notifying survivors of a death in the emergency department can be less traumatic for both the survivor and the physician, nurse, or other health care provider tasked with delivering the news, according to an article published in the March issue of the *Journal of Emergency Nursing*.

Citing a fictitious example of the drowning death of a 13-year-old child as an example, Elizabeth Roe, Ph.D., R.N., of Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan, reviewed the available literature to develop a set of practical strategies that nurses and other [emergency room health care providers](#) can use when faced with death notifications in the [hospital](#)

[emergency department.](#)

The author recommends a six-step procedure for conducting a death notification in the emergency department: preparation; initiating contact with the next of kin, this should be done as soon as possible and in person if feasible; delivering the news; responding to survivors' reactions and providing support, while bearing in mind that individual responses vary greatly; provision of ongoing support/resources in writing, with follow-up as necessary; and dealing with any possible response of the notifier. For each step, the author provides recommended evidence-based strategies.

"As revisitation of the example indicates, death notification is always difficult, but if deliberate strategies are utilized, the incident can potentially be less traumatic for both the survivor and the notifier. The nurse has a [pivotal role](#) both in the actual notification and the continued support of the survivor," the authors write.

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