SUIDI
Conducting the Doll Reenactment

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Overview

♦ Understand the importance of visually recreating how the infant death scene using a doll

♦ Explain Reenactment to Family Member/Caregiver
  - Have Placer/Finder Demonstrate Infant Position(s)
  - Photograph Reenactment
  - Debrief Family Member/Caregiver
“Now I Lay Me Down To Die”

Approximately 5000 infants die suddenly and unexpectedly each year. This training honors their brief yet significant lives…

Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Investigation
The Scene
Objective

- To be able to accurately depict death scene using a doll
- To be able to comfortably conduct a scene recreation using a doll
Why is infant mortality important to me?

- Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is one of the most important indicators of the general level of health or well being in a community.
Some causes of deaths that occur suddenly and unexpectedly during infancy

- SIDS
- Accidental suffocation
- Hypothermia/ Hyperthermia
- Metabolic disorders
- Poisoning
- Unknown
- Neglect or homicide
SUID

**Explained**
- Accidental suffocation
- Poisoning
- Head injury
- Metabolic disorder
- Neglect or homicide
- Hypo or hyperthermia

**Unexplained**
- SIDS
- Cause unknown or unspecified
- SIDS, but cannot rule out suffocation from unsafe sleep environment
Concerned about SIDS & other SUID?

- **SIDS**
  - Leading cause of postneonatal mortality

- **Accidental suffocation & strangulation in bed**
  - Rates have doubled in last decade

- **SUID rates comparable to birth defects**
  - 4600 SUID deaths/year, 2500 SIDS
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

“Sudden death of an infant under one year of age which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history.”

Doll Reenactment

- A Death Scene Investigation needs to be performed on **All** Infant Deaths
  - Even if baby was transported to hospital

- A re-enactment is an essential part of a thorough death scene investigation

N.A.M.E, CDC, NIJ, ABMDI, International Assoc. of Sheriff’s & Police Chiefs, FBI, CDR
Explain Reenactment to Family Member/Caregiver...

*Communication is the key to a successful investigation*
Reenactment Goals

- Accurately depict the sleep environment in which the infant was last placed down to sleep and the position the infant was found.

- Goal: Provide the family with an explanation of what happened to their infant.
Doll Reenactment

Placed

Found
Show the Reenactment Doll to Family Member/Caregiver

- Handle the doll with respect while not attempting to treat the doll as a living infant
- Explain the doll’s use and purpose (tool)
- Demonstrate the articulation of the doll’s body, head, arms and legs (this allows for the positioning of the doll to recreate the exact place/found position(s))
Digitally documents the placed / found position and overall sleep environment

Doll reenactment: critical part of investigation:

- Establishing COD & MOD

You cannot complete a thorough investigation without a scene recreation
Describe the Reenactment Procedure to the Family Member/Caregiver

- Provide a brief explanation of the step-by-step procedure
- Highlight the placer/finder’s role
  - This helps ensure cooperation throughout the reenactment
- Encourage them to ask questions
Hand Reenactment Doll to Participant

- Step-by-step instruction, explaining manipulation of doll for exact placed/found position(s)
- Emphasize importance of ensuring accurate recreation
  - infant body position
  - bed-sharing scenario
  - bedding/blankets
  - toys/stuffed animals
  - positional supports (wedge)
Ask Participant to Demonstrate Exactly HOW Infant was Placed

- Ask the placer to focus on depicting the exact placed position of the infant’s body
  - prone/ supine/ seated
  - face up/down, right/left on sleep surface
- Document infant neck position
  - hyper-extended (head back)
  - flexed (chin to chest)
  - neutral
Placed

Generic weighted doll

Life doll
Ask Participant to Demonstrate Exactly HOW Infant was Placed - continued

- Was the infant sleeping alone?
  - If bed-sharing, digitally document the sleeping position of the infant in relation to the other individual(s)/animal in the sleep environment
  - The investigator will need to ask the individual(s) involved to participate in the reenactment
Photo of placed

Weighted generic doll

Baby doll
Ask Participant to Demonstrate Exactly HOW Infant was Placed - continued

- Recreate sleep environment
  - Bumper pads
  - Pillows, blankets
  - Positional supports
  - Stuffed animal(s) / toy
Placed

Generic weighted doll

Baby doll
Placed
Placed
Ask Participant to Demonstrate Exactly HOW Infant was Found

- Was the infant sleeping alone?
  - If bed-sharing, digitally document the sleeping position of the infant in relation to the other individual(s)/animal in the sleep environment
  - The investigator will need to ask the individual(s) involved to participate in the reenactment
Ask Participant to Demonstrate Exactly HOW Infant was Found

- The finder is the **Primary** Source of information during this reenactment
- Ask the finder to focus on depicting the exact FOUND position of the infant’s body
  - prone/ supine/ seated
  - face up/down, right/left on sleep surface
- Document infant neck position
  - hyper-extended (head back)
  - flexed (chin to chest)
  - neutral
Found

Generic weighted doll

Baby doll
Found

Generic weighted doll

Baby doll
Found

Generic weighted doll

Baby doll
Found
Found
What Happens IF they say “NO”

- Refused reenactment – 2x
- Followed Standard Interviewed Procedure
- Asked them to describe last place & last found
  - Obtain as much detailed information as possible
- Photographed the Scene, Sleep Environment
- Documented Refusal in Report
3 party Scene recreation

Investigator

Investigator reenactment
with family/caregiver oversight
Photograph Reenactment
Photographing Reenactment

- Know what shots are necessary
  - Overview
  - Placed
  - Found
  - Sleep Environment

- Highly Emotional Scene
  - Timely Manner
Photograph bedding

- Perform layer-by-layer photography of bedding
- Documenting any/all objects in sleep environment

*The parent/caregiver do not need to be present for these shots*
Photo document dangerous sleep environments

For an infant
Which is more Dangerous?
“Story” just doesn’t add up?
Suspicious?

- 5 wk old W/M
- 10 lbs. 19 inches length
  - Placed down to sleep in bouncy-chair
Mother’s “story”
-Picked up infant in the morning
-Said his eyes were open, he looked at her
-Next thing she knew, “blood” came out of his nose
“Story” just doesn’t add up?

- Infant presented in the ER in full rigor, fixed lividity over the inferior surface of the body
  - No injuries
- 7 yr old: told someone at school
  - “Mommy said, she didn’t mean to roll- over on the baby”
- = Police Investigation
Communication is the Key

Exit Strategies

Debrief family members or Caregivers
Highlight the personal difficulty of performing a reenactment

- Be sincere, express your condolences
- This is one of the most difficult tasks an individual will ever have to perform
- An empathetic, non-confrontational approach is both appropriate and effective
Reinforce the importance of the reenactment

- Stress the **GOAL** of the reenactment is to be able to provide the family with an explanation of what happened to their infant

- **Thank** them for their cooperation with the reenactment
Encourage the family member/caregiver to ask questions

- Ask if the parents (family, caregiver, etc.) have any questions
- By cooperating, they are assisting in the establishment of both cause and manner of death.
Provide information sheet explaining what takes place at this point

- Provide overview of your office’s procedure
  - Transported to morgue for examination by pathologist
  - Inform family of state law authorizing ME/Coroner to perform examination
Provide timetable for release of official reports
Provide Information Sheet Explaining What Takes Place At This Point

- Explain family’s responsibility
  - Choose a funeral home & let the FH know their loved one is with our office
- Explain the tests that will be performed
  - X-rays
  - Toxicology
  - Histology
  - Genetic screen, etc.
Provide family member/caregiver with office contact numbers

- Provide the family with contact name/phone number and where they can obtain additional information
  - Provide business card
Express Understanding as to the Overwhelming Nature of the Event

- Express a sincere condolence for the person’s loss
- Encourage them to call the office if they should have any further questions
- **Thank** them for their cooperation with the reenactment
SUMMARY

- Keys to Remember:
  - A Death Scene Investigation needs to be performed on All Infant Deaths
    - Even if baby was transported to hospital
  - A re-creation Doll is an essential tool in the investigation
  - Always have the scene recreation performed by the placer & finder
    - Primary source of information
Summary

Goal of Reenactment

- The goal of the infant death reenactment is to be able to accurately depict the sleep environment in which the infant was last placed down to sleep and the position the infant was FOUND.
SUMMARY

- Documenting:
  - Detailed description of the sleep environment
  - Infants position (baby’s nose & mouth)
    - Bedding (Description of sleep surface)
    - Objects near the infant
  - Co-Sleeping / Bed-Sharing
SUMMARY

- Families will want to help if they understand what you are doing
- Provide family with contact name/phone number where they can obtain additional information
- Thank the family for their cooperation and assistance with the reenactment
SUIDI Training: *Protecting future Superheroes*

Team Texas Suidi Academy
PSA-Kids First, Indiana
THE END

additional resources

www.cdc.gov
www.childdeathreview.org
www.sidscenter.org
www.nisa-sids.org