At least we can send some flowers…

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ABSTRACT

Aims and background. Cancer may demand lengthy treatment and the emotional attachment between care providers and the patient may become intense, especially when the latter is a child. If patients die, their families and the care-providing staff need help to cope with the loss.

Short communication. We describe a procedure in use at the Istituto Nazionale Tumori in Milan for taking leave of families whose children die. This practice is based on simply sending flowers to families who have lost their child, and was started after an emotionally very demanding case.

Conclusion. Our sending flowers with a handwritten condolence letter is a simple gesture that seems to have helped both the patients’ families and the members of our care-providing team in the process of mourning.

Key words: grief, bereavement, psychological support, psychology, pediatric oncology, condolence letter.

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