

Redesign the family room to make it relaxing,
soothing, educational, and supportive

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Nina

Quote 1: “I was always thinking how I can help my son without interfering with the doctors since I know that with them he is in the best of hands.”

Quote 2: “Support from other moms was sometimes better than from nurses because it was nice to talk to ‘someone like me’.”

Quote 3: “My husband would say I was married to my pump. While I pumped, I would try to meditate and focus on the fact that I was doing the best I could for my son.”

Takeaway: Nina had a deep trust for the medical staff regarding health care decisions for her son. When it came to receiving emotional support, the community of NICU mothers were more effective than the social workers.



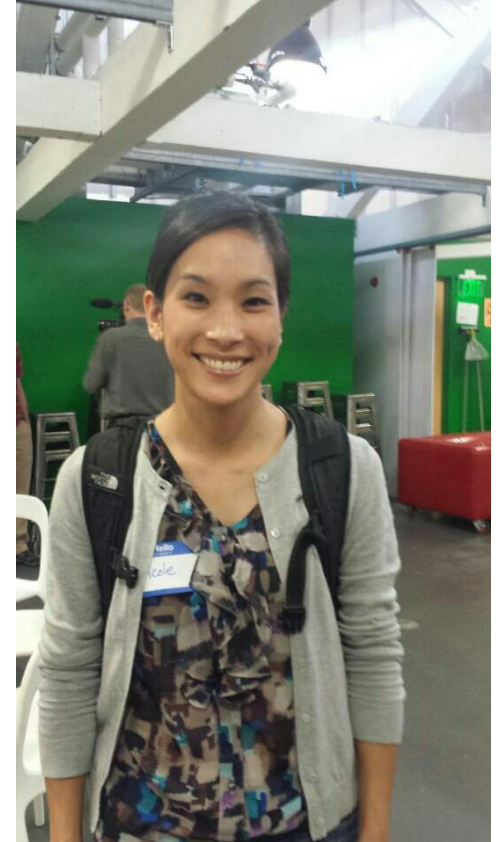
Nicole

Quote 1: “Many of our engineer parents want to know how everything works and like to micromanage. It can come across to doctors and nurses that there is a lack of trust.”

Quote 2: “I explain the monitors to parents based on colors, but a lot of times during the first orientation the mom is in a wheelchair”

Quote 3: “We can get interpreters when there is a language barrier but sometimes we have to do it over the phone, which can be very clumsy passing it back and forth”

Takeaway: The medical staff can sometimes misinterpret the motivation behind parents actions. It is not uncommon for parents to not completely grasp explanations of equipment or conditions the first time they are told.



David

Quote 1: “I have become prone to panic attacks since my twins entered the NICU, when things get serious the loss of control can be traumatic. It’s a true life and death feeling.”

Quote 2: “My favorite spot is a big fountain... late afternoon, sunlight, water, trees, musicians fleeting round”

Quote 3: “I wish there was a place where I could go to be alone, to lose my mind, and to come out fresher and with some clarity”

Takeaway: David tried several different ways to cope with the extreme stress of having children in the NICU with varying success. His wants and needs also fluctuated day to day and hour to hour (i.e., wanting to be alone vs. wanting to talk to someone). A good design will account for these fluctuations in all parents.



Madeline

Quote 1: “We can’t always adhere to the plan the parents have for their baby and we have to explain to them why and that we will try to come as close as possible”

Quote 2: “A lot of the babies we take care of we see very sick and then well enough to go home. We go through their ups and downs with them and form a close relationship with the whole family. It is difficult to see them go even though we are happy for them”

Quote 3: “I always start every phone call with ‘everything is okay’ when I call parents.”

Takeaway: The medical staff can help parents by understanding the stress that is being put on them and considering parent involvement as an extension of the care they provide to babies. The deep care that the nurses show for the babies is noticed by parents and can help establish trust between the two parties.



Rachel

Quote 1: “Care conferences really benefit the family but it can be a time challenge coordinating medical teams to meet”

Quote 2: “As a social worker you’re the one consistent person throughout the patient’s hospitalization. The most common issues that parents come to social workers for are concerns about the nursing staff or conflicting information from multiple clinicians”

Quote 3: “Especially for families coming from far away or who had to come in the middle of the night, it can be very helpful to have basic things such as a toothbrush or deodorant, basic things they didn’t have a chance to bring with them”

Takeaway: Beyond the medical staff attending the babies in the NICU, the social workers are there to ensure the well-being of the parents, helping them address situations that might arise around medical care, setting up care conferences for parents, and providing consistent guidance throughout the mother and child’s stay in the hospital. Care conferences are important to Rachel and she believes them to be an important resource for parents.