Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

EMMA CHALIFOUR

BEd Hons (Leeds University, 1993)

“Can I See my Daddy?’ Children and Families as Visitors in the Adult Intensive Care Unit”

School of Child and Youth Care

Wednesday, December 16, 2020
10:00am (PST)
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Alison Gerlach, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Sarah Wright Cardinal, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Ingrid Handlovsky, School of Nursing, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Juan Ausio, Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, UVic

Dr. Stephen V. Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to supply preliminary insights into improving the support of visiting children and families during the intensive care unit stay (ICU) of an adult family member. Hospitals often restrict children from visiting in ICUs; however, a review of the literature revealed that despite the prevalence of this policy, there has been little research into whether visiting is harmful or supportive.1 Although family-centred care (FCC) is considered beneficial for adult family members,2 there is little evidence that policymakers have considered the involvement of children during an ICU stay.3 Through interviews, seven families shared their experiences of the critical illness of a loved one. Using a constructionist lens, this study explored the interaction between the gathered stories and the policies and practices associated with children and families visiting critical care contexts in British Columbia (BC), Canada. The exploration led to a list of ten preliminary insights that could inform the policies and practices associated with supporting children and families as visitors in an ICU. This study found that the involvement of children in the family illness event is important but emphasizes that tailoring involvement to the individual needs of the child is crucial. While navigating an ICU stay, families may benefit from a collaborative approach between the child, their caregiver/s, and a member of the ICU team. The goal of this research is that it will resonate with its readers and move people to deeper curiosity and further study.

Keywords: visitation policies, children, ICU, family-centred care, health care, critical illness