

Supplementary Appendix

Table A. Additional illustrative data supporting each sub-theme

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative data
Successes	Fostering family-centered care during a pandemic	<p><i>“The family integrated care... it’s top notch. It’s a hundred percent. Like having to join... rounds is specific on the kind of care you want done for your kids” [Family-11].</i></p> <p><i>“I was able to say that I don’t want her taking baths in a shampoo, and that was followed. And I think everything I said, they would consider” [Family-8].</i></p>
	HCP adaptability and institutional changes	<p>The HCPs <i>“sense of humour [is] really ... [what] opened my heart up a little bit more to allowing other people to take care of my baby. ... They helped me put my mind at ease for everything because they know what they’re doing and they help. If I needed help with anything, they’re right there for me” [Family-1].</i></p> <p><i>“That has been the biggest reward and also the biggest struggle to watch families lose out on time, whether it’s the other parent at home or both parents at home or having a mom or support person go through a lot of really happy and a lot of really sad things on their own. That has been the biggest and worst part of this, but also comes with a great privilege to be able to do that with them” [HCP-6].</i></p> <p><i>“The hospital... actually been providing food for us... this is a plus... they tried to make sure that they get meals for parents. And now that we have another support, they are providing meals for both parents, which is something that, you know, at least is like a positive thing that we’re going to say thank you for, you know” [Family-3].</i></p>
	Use of technology to bridge the gap	<p>One family said that joining rounds was <i>“beautiful” [Family-4].</i></p> <p>Healthcare providers felt that <i>“it [was] good that there [were] more families accessing remotely... who wouldn’t have been here even if it wasn’t for COVID because they had to work so I think it’s becoming more mainstream or accessible that people can do that remotely. We’ve said it for quite some time that parents are encouraged to participate in rounds in whatever way is good for them, but I didn’t see it as much before COVID” [HCP-7].</i></p>
Challenges faces	Lack of standardized messaging	<p><i>“You know, they just say, you know, ‘Check on Facebook or check on the IWK website. You know, there’s a COVID page. Any updates will be on there.’ But I mean... Again, like I said, I don’t think they know it until the last minute because even when the restrictions were lifted, the day that I did go into labour, half the nurses didn’t even know” [Family-9].</i></p>
	Failure in fully engaging families, including gaps in family-centered care	<p>Families were <i>“separated from rounds, so they’re not being engaged like they had been before, because in order for the families to be closer to us, we have to be further away from the door, and so I feel like I’m having to either choose to talk to the family and have them hear or talk to the HCP that are accessing remotely” [HCP-7].</i></p> <p>The families who were not present in the NICU said <i>“in the care aspect, yes, I would have liked to have more to say. But I think if I were</i></p>

	and challenges with feeding	<p><i>there, I would have had more input because I would have been there” [Family-8].</i></p> <p>HCPs commented that a COVID-19 positive mother with an infant in the NICU, would not be able to enter the unit to feed her infant, saying they <i>“had a hard time with that. Luckily, we didn't have in any of that happen... Obviously you have to protect the unit. But a mom has a right to feed her baby” [HCP-9].</i></p> <p><i>“I want to [breast]feed them, right. I know there's other ways. But again, you know, that's kind of, you know, a mother's right to nurse or formula feed. But it's hard as a mother” [Family-9].</i></p>
	Impact on parental mental and physical well-being	<p>HCPs also noted that the <i>“restrictions for visitations have been very stressful for the families” [HCP-5],</i> that <i>“those really heartbreaking decisions that families had to make really affected staff too, and staff morale... it was difficult for a lot of people. Mostly for the families, but even for staff” [HCP-10].</i></p> <p><i>“I think the hardest time that I felt was when the restrictions started to come into play. Because you would sit with families and you would hear from families all the uncertainty of what was coming next... families had... expressed a lot of concern about what was coming next and what would be expected. So I think that was challenging” [HCP-11].</i></p> <p>Many of the families spoke about how detrimental being <i>“alone and secluded” [Family-1]</i> during this difficult time was to their mental health.</p> <p><i>“I felt kind of like I was isolated in my own little island, and I didn't really have as much support” [Family-5].</i></p>
	Unequitable virtual care	<p><i>“I definitely don't connect with the team in the same way” [HCP-10].</i></p> <p><i>“for lactation, they have literally forgotten that we were there” [HCP-11],</i></p> <p><i>“Technology glitches right, so sometimes you get cut off on the call or you miss what someone says because they're too far away from the mic or whatever it may be” [HCP-1].</i></p> <p><i>“The whole precaution, everyone trying to observe precaution. At some point, it felt discriminatory. But then I know it's the right thing to do. But everybody being so careful around you and all of that sometimes makes you want to question your own health status” [Family-11].</i></p>
Strategies for moving forward		<p><i>“We didn't have those things. And we had to develop them as it came up... it was done very individually... with, you know, direct communication with that mom and dad... And when one process didn't work, then, you know, we adapted it” [HCP-10].</i></p> <p><i>“People were adapting to COVID-19 as it happened. I'm not sure that they could have eased that any. The people that we spoke with who were advising us of these changes were very compassionate” [Family-6].</i> Families strongly urged that <i>“two parents be allowed to stay in the NICU. It's beneficial overall, 100 percent” [Family-11].</i></p>

HCP: healthcare provider