



EMERGE Conference: A Learning Opportunity

One of the most humbling experiences for me this year was the opportunity to speak at the Emergency Medicine Education & Research Global Exchange (EMERGE) Conference, hosted by The Aga Khan University (AKU) Medical College in Pakistan. The theme, Rethinking Emergency Care Science, brought together professionals from around the world to explore the future of emergency medicine, and I was honored to give the keynote address. My presentation focused on emotional safety, leadership, equity, and inquiry in emergency medicine education—topics that are not only central to our work but also deeply aligned with the values of our association.

The conversations that followed were eye-opening, reminding me of the universal need for emotional safety, particularly in high-pressure settings like emergency medicine. I also had the privilege of co-leading two workshops with Dr. Jabeen Fayyaz from The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Together, we explored how simulation can be used to improve emotional safety, and we received positive feedback from the attendees who found emotional safety a new concept. It was truly a learning experience for me, one that reinforced how essential emotional safety is to pediatric healthcare, no matter the context.

What stood out to me most at the EMERGE conference was how eager everyone was to embrace emotional safety as a priority. The openness and generosity of the attendees, combined with their willingness to explore new ideas, reminded me how much we all share in the desire to create safer, more supportive environments for children. It was a privilege to be part of such an inspiring exchange of knowledge and to bring these lessons back to our work at home.

President's Perspective

By: Sarah Patterson, MSc, CCLS

As fall arrives with a few months left in the year, I reflect on the incredible work our community has done to center emotional safety in our everyday practice. It has been a season full of learning, collaboration, and growth, and I feel truly grateful to be part of an association so deeply committed to the emotional well-being of the children and families we serve. The progress we've made in 2024 sets a strong foundation as we move into 2025, and a new strategic plan, and I want to take a moment to highlight some key experiences and initiatives that have shaped our journey.

Supporting Emotional Safety Through Child Life Disaster Relief

This year also brought a profound reminder of the importance of emotional safety in times of crisis. As hurricanes swept through various regions, families and children were left grappling with loss, fear, and uncertainty. In response, our association supported the Child Life Disaster Relief (CLDR) organization in their efforts to provide emotionally safe care to children affected by these disasters.

CLDR's work, offering therapeutic play and emotional support to children in disaster-stricken areas, is a powerful example of how emotional safety can be a lifeline in the most challenging of circumstances. ACLP's donation to CLDR felt like a small but meaningful way to contribute to this critical mission. Their work continues to inspire all of us to think more deeply about how we can support children not just in routine care, but in moments of great vulnerability.

Looking Forward to 2025

As we move toward 2025, I am reminded that the journey toward fully embedding emotional safety in every facet of pediatric healthcare is ongoing.

There is always more to learn, more to share, and more we can do to ensure that children feel safe, supported, and understood. I am continually inspired by the dedication of our members, who have made emotional safety a priority in their own organizations.

In the coming year, we plan to build on the progress we've made by working with several healthcare partnerships, advocating for emotionally safe policies, and continuing to elevate emotional safety globally. None of this work is possible without the collective efforts of our community, and I want to thank each of you for the contributions you've made to this mission.

Emotional safety is not just a goal—it's a responsibility we all share. I am honoured to continue this work with you and look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2025. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to the emotional well-being of children and families. I am deeply grateful to be part of such a caring and passionate community.

Warmly,

Sarah Patterson, MSc, CCLS
President, Association of Child Life Professionals

