Intentional Presence in the Operating Room
Gretchen Pagac RN CNOR, Andrea H.M. Gabriel RN BSN CNOR and Gail Pietrzyk RN, MS, CNOR DNPC

VISION

Each operative patient experience is unique, recognizing each patient as a person. All too often, the OR is perceived as a cold, loud, foreign land and this initiative personalized each patient experience. The Vision within the Operating Room is that through teamwork the OR can embrace each patient’s unique needs. Through awareness of self and colleagues, we will provide a safe and respectful surgical experience. By mentoring and nurturing we will promote personal and professional growth.

INSPRIATION

High levels of Stress, Fear and Anxiety are common for the patient undergoing surgery. In an effort to give the patient back some control and diminish fear and anxiety, the UPC created a campaign to heighten awareness of the vulnerability and isolation a patient may feel. The patient needs to be seen as more than a procedure, they should be seen as a whole person, an individual who has entrusted us with their safety.

Auditory Volume
Isolation from Their Family Members
Campaign to increase awareness of the vulnerability and isolation that surgical patients feel and experience

Restriction of Physical Activity

The Operating Room is a sacred environment in which the patients have entrusted their lives to the Surgical Team

EDUCATION

“You are entering a sacred ground where people trust their lives with us.” Utilizing protected staff meeting time, Anesthesia and Operating Room staff were invited into a dimly lit auditorium and given warm blankets to recreate the sense of comfort and relaxation afforded in the preoperative area. Soft music was played until all staff were comfortably seated. At this time the video began playing, a black screen with the audio overlay of the operating room noise and the dim lights were brought to full strength quickly arousing the staff from their restful state. The staff could then hear the conversations, tasks, banging, talking and other activities simulating a patient experience in the operating room. Following this, the video introduced staff to the concept of Operation Quiet Time, a moment of time when the team stops conversation and activity to welcome the patient into the surgery suite. Education for the staff focused on awareness of the provider and small behavior changes that could greatly impact the patient’s perception of the surgical experience.

The presentation concluded with opportunities and possibilities for the staff on implementing and improving Operation Quiet Time. Opportunities include: presence of the primary nurse at the patient’s side through induction and informing patients regarding each step of the process, introduction of all staff members and their roles to the patient upon arrival, making eye contact with the patient when talking to them, elimination of personal conversations between staff, reducing music volume prior to patient entry, reduction of excessive noise related to instrumentation.

Following the simulation, staff returned to the department and each OR door was labeled with a picture of a co-worker reminding them that Operation Quiet Time was in effect. During the simulation, Unit Practice Council members placed pictures of a co-worker on each surgical suite door reminding that Operation Quiet Time was in effect.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In an effort to sensitize the providers on how the surgical patient perceives their experience, the UPC created a video that demonstrated how noisy certain tasks could be as well as how the patient perceives the operating room experience. The video began with the audio recording of staff opening and preparing for a surgery. The noise level caused by the tasks necessary for room preparation were captured to demonstrate what patients will hear when entering the operative suite. Often when the patient enters the room, the team is focused on their own task and do not take into account the needs of the patient. The video emphasizes the importance of developing a relationship by introducing ourselves and making the environment quiet for the patient. The video serves as a reminder to always make the patient our priority.

EVIDENCE

The impact of Operation Quiet Time is positively noted by staff, physicians and patients. Behavior change within the Surgical Suite was noted, staff reported increased understanding of the importance of their role in positively impacting the patient’s experience. Increased participation by the Surgeons and Anesthesiologists in Operation Quiet Time was acknowledged by the staff and influenced the engaging commitment to this initiative. Patients recount their appreciation of being introduced to staff members upon entering the suite and felt less anxious and more comfortable with their surgery experience.

For more information, contact Gretchen Pagac at gpagac@crittenton.com