



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Connecting with the Team

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Recently I have been interviewing applicants for a registered nurse position in my day surgery unit. I had 19 nurses apply for one opening. I interviewed them all and met some really wonderful nurses who I would have loved to hire. Unfortunately I could only choose one. As I went through the interview process, I tried to find out why each nurse wanted to leave their current position and move into outpatient perianesthesia nursing. One response really got to me. The applicant told me that in her current work setting there was no camaraderie, no support, and no sharing of information and knowledge. She wanted to move into outpatient surgery with the hope of cross-training to all the areas and to work as part of the "team." I was a bit taken aback because I had been expecting the "no call, no weekends, no holidays" response, not this matter-of-fact statement of despair and dismay.

I began to think about what we, as professional nurses, can do to connect with our peers and help them survive in the workplace. While nursing is exciting and challenging, we understand that the first few weeks in any new department can be overwhelming as the new employee strives to assimilate into a new work environment and a new group of professional peers. Experienced nurses can facilitate the orientation of the newly employed nurse and enhance their integration into the unit. Our new coworkers not only need to gain new knowledge and skills, but they need to gain a sense of belonging. It is up to us to help them succeed as a member of the team and then to help retain them in our departments. Each of us plays a key role in this process. Once orientation is complete, we need to strive to work as a team, mentor our peers, and promote overall satisfaction in the workplace.

It is important for each of us to do our part to connect with our new teammates. Take them under our wing. Get to know them. Help them understand the group and how it functions. We should find out how they can best contribute to the success of our team and make sure that we contribute to that success. It is necessary to draw upon the particular strengths and skills of each person in the unit to offer the new employee information and perspectives of several skilled peers.

Once we get the new employee connected with the team, we need to think about making the team succeed. One night I mentioned this issue to my husband at dinner. He said, "Nancy, remember there is no 'I' in TEAM, and when you go to work each day you should always think team." So, yes, every day when I go to work I try to "think team," and I believe we should all do this. Instead of narrowly focusing on our individual assignment and nothing else, we should try to be aware of what else is going on. We should maintain a positive attitude and be eager to help our coworkers. We should broaden our skills and cross-train in order to have the ability to help out. We should treat each other with respect, learn about each other, and take steps to help each other improve in areas that are weak.

Teamwork is key to the success of any department. A quote by Dan Zadra helps put this in perspective. "If you want help, help others. If you want love, give it away. If you want friends, be one. If you want a great team, be a great teammate. That's how it works."¹

Let's take the opportunity to maximize the value of information sharing and peer support. We can each make the choice to help our teams move beyond the status quo and into the arena of excellence. I haven't yet decided which applicant will get the RN position in my department, but I do know every effort will be made to help them succeed, gain confidence, and feel like an integral part of the team.

REFERENCE

1. Zadra D:To Your Success. Compendium, Inc. Edmunds, WA. 1995, p 54.