

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF A “SENSORY FRIENDLY” PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN THE PEDIATRIC PERIOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Team Leaders: Jennifer M. Roth MS, RN, CPNP, CPN, Jessica Correnti, MS, CCLS, CEIM  
Charlotte Bloomberg Children’s Center, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- The prevalence of children with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis in the United States is 1 in 68.
- The Johns Hopkins Pediatric Perioperative Unit sees 450+ patients per year with autism.
- Part of the DSM-5 symptomology of this diagnosis includes sensory processing differences/difficulties.
- These differences/difficulties may manifest as maladaptive coping behaviors not conducive to safe/effective/efficient care.

### **OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT:**

- Develop a patient specific protocol to modify of the sensory environment in the perioperative setting. End result of increased patient comfort, compliance and satisfaction with the perioperative experience. Decrease the need for additional time consuming/costly/distress inducing interventions.

### **PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Educate perioperative team on autism spectrum disorder via audiovisual presentation and evaluate understanding
- Formulation and implementation a sensory-friendly protocol that is patient specific
  - Provide items & tools to modify sensory environment
  - Utilizing parents as experts of their child to know how to adapt care to individual child’s unique needs
  - Pre-op phone call with sensory needs checklist
  - Train perioperative team on sensory needs and possible interventions-including use of sensory tools and visual schedules
  - Evaluate satisfaction via parental questionnaire

### **STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:**

- Increase in patient comfort
- Decrease in patient stress
- Increase in patient safety
- Increase in caregiver safety

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING:**

- This protocol can be implemented in most perioperative settings
- Measure additional outcomes such as maladaptive behavior, time spent and need for additional interventions
- Expand to additional populations with sensory processing disorders
- Make part of the standard protocol for child-specific patient care
- Measure anxiety outcomes using EB tool