

The Power of a Team Huddle During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Team Leader: Staci Eguia MSN RN CCRN

Institution: The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas

Team Members: Mahroz Mohammed BSN RN CMSRN, Kimberly Potts MSN RN CNOR

Background Information: Debriefing is a structured process designed to continuously evolve in rapidly changing situations that originated in the military as a way to learn quickly and address concerns or changes. In a leading oncology organization, a new offsite ambulatory procedure unit was established. Leading a new clinical team during a pandemic can be challenging. The focus of daily team huddles was to mitigate fear related to COVID-19 healthcare challenges, promote team work, address patient safety concerns, establish workflows, and identify challenges.

Objectives of Project: Establish a daily team huddle to promote

- Problem solving
- Communication forum during COVID-19 Crisis
- Create healthy work environment standards
- Identify risk management concerns
- Promote teamwork
- Provides a venue for feedback
- Develop leadership skills for charge nurses
- Safe environment for discussion
- Discuss strategic direction

Process of Implementation: Implementation of the team huddle was established by the leadership team which included the nurse manager, assistant nurse manager, and clinical development specialist. Daily team huddles were conducted at the same designated time and location. Guidelines for the team huddle were developed including: check in with the team, daily institutional COVID-19 updates, patient census and review staffing, potential patient safety concerns, anticipated needs for the next day, positive outcomes, recommended improvements, workflow concerns, open forum with no topic off limits, staff recognition (end with a win) and thank everyone for attending the huddle.

Statement of Successful Practice: Ninety five percent of staff members surveyed indicated that conducting a daily debrief was an effective way to communicate institutional updates. Eighty nine percent of team members indicated that the daily team huddle improved their communication with leadership and team members. Ninety nine percent of team members surveyed felt safe speaking up in the daily debrief. All team members surveyed indicated daily debriefs can improve the patient experience.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Conducting daily team huddles improved team communication by creating a safe venue where team members felt empowered to address workflow concerns and identify safety issues. Implementation of this daily communication tool could help improve staff retention, patient safety and the patient experience.