

PACU Stat! Utilizing Low Fidelity Simulation to Enhance Teamwork and Build Confidence Among PACU Nurses during Crisis Situations

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Background Information: The PACU experienced a distressing code event in January 2017 that resulted in a successful resuscitation and return to OR, but left nursing staff feeling frustrated with the lack of organization, role designation, and leadership throughout the duration of the event.

Objectives of Project:

- Provide a safe and confidential setting for PACU nurses to participate in a mock emergency simulation.
- Promote a culture of safety through clear designation of roles and identification of the team leader.
- Build upon multidisciplinary teamwork and closed-loop communication skills through formal debriefing.

Process of Implementation: The PACU nurse educator consulted with the Mock Code Program Director for Med-Surg nursing practice as well as the Anesthesia Simulation Director to initiate a PACU-specific simulation program. A survey was first conducted amongst PACU nurses to determine the focus points for this program. PACU nurses were provided with on-line pre-learning, assigned in conjunction with a 1-hour interactive simulation. Simulations were conducted using “Basic Assumptions” and a review of the “Ground Rules for Simulation.” Groups consisted of 5-8 PACU nurses and 1 anesthesia resident. The scenarios were conducted in nursing skills labs, with low fidelity mannequins and mock crash cart. A formal debriefing occurred afterwards. Sessions were conducted over a 2 year period and all participants provided feedback via anonymous evaluations.

Statement of Successful Practice: The PACU staff subsequently experienced a code event in May 2018. The bedside nurse had participated in the simulation program and as a result felt empowered to designate roles and identify the team leader. This code resulted in both a positive outcome for the patient, and a positive outcome for the staff involved; the communication and teamwork had vastly improved from the January 2017 event. A formal debriefing was conducted with the staff members who determined that closed loop communication and teamwork led to a successful resuscitation.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Teamwork and communication are essential in emergency situations. The PACU Simulations provide an opportunity for perianesthesia nurses to practice and build these skills in a safe and confidential multidisciplinary environment. The simulations are an excellent adjunct to the required training that is completed via ACLS every 2 years.