



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Energizing Generations: The Race to Distinction Continues!

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How time flies! Do you realize it has been two months since ASPAN's national conference in the beautiful city of Philadelphia? What a great time we all had. We were inspired by opening speaker Rich Bluni, RN, author of the book *Inspired Nurse*. He reminded us of why we chose the profession, what keeps us going as a nurse, and the sacred moments all nurses have had or will have. Closing speaker Renee Thompson finished the week by looking at nurses as heroes, "*Human by Birth – Hero by Choice*". She spoke to us about being modern day superheroes with super powers, but how ignorance, judgments, and bullying are a few of the villains that sap us of our heroic powers. She also reminded us that our profession of nursing continues to be the most trusted profession.¹ Nurses of all ages should be proud of such a distinction.

Each year during national conference, many of us come together for a week of education, networking and celebration. At the opening ceremonies, I was amazed as to the number of first-time attendees present, some young and some not so young. This is a testament to the strength of our shared desire to participate in, and fulfill our educational needs. During conference week, I observed the attendees and I made a mental note and a concerted effort to seek out younger nurses and engage them in conversation. I asked, "What is it about this conference that made them attend?" I received a variety of answers, but most were centered on the educational offerings, and the variety of classes from novice to expert. Many first-time and younger attendees enjoyed the poster presentations, both research and Celebrate Successful Practices. The younger nurses I spoke with were motivated and encouraged by all, and enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere of ASPAN's national conference.

My theme, *Energizing Generations: The Race to Distinction*, will focus on addressing the generational diversity we see in our profession and the direction in which we see ASPAN moving. This is the first time in history all four generations are working together.² Each generation, Traditionalist, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and Millennials, has different values, different ideas and different ways of getting things done. According to the National Nursing Workforce 2015 Study, 50% of the RNs are age 50 or older,³ but we must consider that 50% are also younger. We have all heard it said that over the next 10 to 15 years, nearly one million RNs, about one third of the current workforce – will reach retirement age.⁴ As we consider both the veteran nurse at the pinnacle of his/her career, and the younger and less experience nurses at the beginning of their careers, ASPAN, like many other nursing organizations, needs to evolve. It needs to shift some of its focus toward the fledgling, less skillful, newer perianesthesia nurse. I ask, what do we have in place to attract the Generation Xers, Millennials, and generations to come, to commit to perianesthesia nursing and ASPAN?

Contemporary Educational Platforms

Over the last few years, we have seen ASPAN's educational programs change and develop into programs that appeal to learners from all generations. We now have many more web-based programs, both live and learner paced modules. We offer many of the webcasts at different times during the day, and will now offer weekday opportunities in which to participate and learn during a live webcast. We will have more bundled modules, such as the Certification Review Modules, and ASPAN plans to offer many short programs to accommodate anyone's lifestyle. We will always continue to offer live face-to-face presentations, but may have less of them than in years past. Many nurses may question the need for such change, believing that live education sessions with networking is superior to web-based learning. But the younger generations have different ways of learning. They are tech-savvy and very comfortable

with electronics. They prefer to learn at home, on their own time, emailing questions to a live webcast, texting each other, blogging as a way of expressing ideas and tweeting current information. As an organization, we must adapt to these requests and continue to consider all avenues for education.

Why We Do What We Do

The younger generations have rocketed up the need for evidence-based practice (EBP) in nursing, asking the questions of “why we do what we do.” ASPAN is working on creating an interactive way to blog on its journal club Web site to pique the interest of young members interested in evidence-based practice. This will ultimately result in a way to affect the best patient care and improve patient outcomes. Several years ago, ASPAN joined the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI), providing its members with up-to-date access to research articles. As an organization, we adapted the JBI model for review of evidence and we are now routinely leveling and appraising current evidence to support the ASPAN practice recommendations. ASPAN will continue to create and support original research projects for both the novice and expert researcher. Research is front and center to many younger nurses, as evident in the numerous research posters presented at national conference this year.

The Race to Distinction!

As an organization moving forward, we need to be cognizant of the future nurse, and the future of nursing. As I move through my presidency, “energizing generations” plays a role in how ASPAN proceeds. We will continue to create innovative programming for all generations. Our research and EBP demands will continue to be addressed. I envision the future of ASPAN’s educational products to be even more interactive, and at our fingertips. ASPAN has always tried to look towards the future. We do have a way to go, but I believe the generations ahead will direct our path.

REFERENCES

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