



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Caring Environments and Engaging Cultures

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Let's start off with "curiosity and wonder" questions. How does one create a caring perianesthesia setting? This seems to be a recurring conversation by leaders and colleagues. How can we engage staff or recruit members? Why does this matter? It takes courage to be vulnerable and pose mindful queries, especially when the answer is revealed. It starts by looking in the mirror. We, as nurses, should compassionately care for each other. We can be the voice for caring actions.

Fitting in Versus Belonging

We are all tiny pieces in complex puzzles. Each delicate piece is unique and is a search for the perfect fit. Finding where you belong within a caring team environment is even more important in today's changing world. Brene Brown's book, *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connections and Language of Human Experience*, discusses the terms of fitting in and belonging.¹ Dr. Brown notes the differences of definitions: "Fitting in is being accepted for being like everyone else and belonging is being accepted for you. Be here. Be you. Belong."¹

Hierarchy of Needs

Caring and healthy environments are everyday necessities. Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" includes belonging and love as the third foundation out of eight in his established pyramid.² Social belonging is an important connection to a person's well-being. Nurses are four million strong.³ Nurses are known for being the most trusted and respected profession.⁴ Collaboratively, nurses have the greatest advantage for ensuring positive engaging environments are fostered by our recognized caring qualities. Nurses can encourage and appreciate different perspectives, inclusion of diverse populations, cultures, communities, and team environments. We can connect the dots of human needs through empowering activism as a means to heighten health equity policies and reforms for all populations.⁴

Growing a caring team is quintessential to nursing. Dr. Jean Watson's "Philosophy and Science of Caring" prioritizes four influential and familiar notions. This includes human beings, health, environment/society and nursing.⁵ Leaders' and colleagues' caring awareness is necessary to meet the needs of staff, patients, and oneself. Engagement and team member participation will not happen magically. If teams recognize and adopt belonging concepts into their organizational structures and strategies, higher levels of engagement will transpire. Ensuring a compassionate approach to supporting teams is the most direct path to inspiring a sense of one's belonging and feeling included.

Healthy Environments

Caring collaboratively to embrace a healthy environment is an important step in growing a thriving garden for learning and cultures of retention. Nature can teach us and share many experiences for wonder, curiosity, appreciation, growth, adaptability and how to nurture our microclimates and cultures. Cultivating kindness, respect, empathy, psychological safety, diversity, inclusion, equity, accountability, and responsibility of behavioral expectations are criteria for the healthy environment to grow and develop. Start by tending to the soil. It is the foundation for standardizing enforced principles, policies, and process for all. Successfully planted seeds can germinate and grow within hospitable conditions to nurture vulnerable seedlings. Providing sunshine, water, and amendments are required for all growing opportunities. Of course, avoiding too much stress that creates unfavorable growth will decrease bountiful

yields of plants and teams. Finding balance and resilience are the secrets to a healthy microenvironment and positive mindsets. Maintaining emotional integrity and physical security to avoid potential harm is a required safety net for growing bumper crops, best outcomes, and a sense of belonging.

Engagement

Engagement is a buzzword in today's new world. Our communities, workplaces and components are looking for collaborative and engaged people to join our inner circles and extend strengths in our perianesthesia numbers. Yet many empty spots are open for the taking. Dr. Rose O. Sherman suggests refocusing cultural engagement strategies that evolve from organizational core values, purpose, mission statements with a vision.⁶ Recruitment tools to nurture team development should include: championing professional growth, recognition, mentoring opportunities, valuing one's well-being, empowerment, and collaborative decision-making. These simple pathways increase colleague engagement, commitment, retention, and satisfaction, and minimize burnout.⁶

Sport team members aspire to a common purpose of we and not me. The outcome for playing better together occurs best when teams embrace the we or us team perspective and not a me mindset. This simple shift changes the team dynamics to a group perspective of community contribution and not individual successes. Emotional intelligence should be integrated in the team's thinking processes. Team power can have an immense outcome that produces effective impact while contributing or giving to others and being fully present in activities. Building stronger bonds among the entire team benefits everyone. A team mindfulness mentality minimizes blame and inner conflicts by building relationships. Team mindfulness ensures purposeful strategies can be elevated with effective leaders, team buy-in and professional development.

Communication, trust and sharing responsibility promotes team building. There is tremendous value in encouraging belonging values in groups. It is foundational for our mental well-being to feel supported by a caring team. It only takes a small shift to generate a huge impact. A culture of social change inspires a willingness to serve among members when barriers are reduced. The micro change begins with the power of one person, then blossoms to benefit optimistic conditions. What a grand way to share our passions, and enhance nursing workplaces, communities, or the world.

For those readers seeking a powerful alternative visual experience, this video located in the reference below delivers a unique perspective for fostering organizational culture, respect and empowerment through caring that taps into our human caring qualities.⁷ A recent 2022 report from "The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being" is a 30-page document encouraged to be downloaded and built upon as a workplace resource to promote "worker's voice and equity."⁸

We can make a difference when we actively care about our healthy circumstances, and the impact for others. Collectively, we can lift each other up towards the bright sunshine. Things that matter: caring environments matter, nurturing matters, trust and respect matter, growing and mentoring each other matter, positive mindset and empathy matter, perianesthesia nurses matter. Be the voice for belonging as a caring change agent!

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