



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Perianesthesia Nurses Together – The Importance of Human Connection, Power of Community!

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Some things are simply better together, such as peanut butter and jelly, or Oreos and milk. Perianesthesia nurses and ASPAN are simply better together! Just as water is essential for life, so is connection essential for humanity. Maintaining togetherness, connection, and a sense of community strengthens and empowers perianesthesia nurses.

Increased Loneliness and Burnout

The Kaiser Family Foundation in 2018 reported over 55 million people felt lonely and isolated.¹ Human relationship is as essential to our wellbeing as is food and water. Hunger and thirst are our body's signals that we need to stop to replenish our energy stores by eating and drinking. Loneliness is the natural signal that we need to connect with others. Sweeping throughout our world and perpetuating loneliness are addiction, depression, anxiety, obesity, and violence.

Building a more connected world holds the key to solving these and many more of the personal and societal problems confronting us today. In 2019, the *Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing* published a study on burnout. At that time, of 2,837 perianesthesia nurses who responded, 18% were currently and 35% had previously experience burnout.² Then came COVID19. Dare we speculate on the conceivable increase of loneliness and burnout among society and our beloved nursing specialty?

Staying Connected to Prevent Burnout

Perianesthesia nursing is complex. There are mental, intellectual, emotional, and physical demands placed on us daily. Staying connected serves to protect us from burnout. The United States has an estimated 60,000 perianesthesia nurses.³ Our best and most significant work can come through ASPAN, which is 14,000 members strong. There are many powerful benefits of connecting within large and small groups. Working together with ASPAN, component societies, districts, and chapters empowers the perianesthesia nurse to impact patient care on a grander scale. A large group, like ASPAN, has authority to create standards, practice recommendations, and position statements. ASPAN impacts policy, provides education, and develops research that permeates our specialty. ASPAN rewards through recognition by providing scholarships and awards.

Where the power of one voice is strong, a community has even greater power. Being together and part of something larger than ourselves is truly special. It generates energy that propels us forward and fills our tank. Together, we can attempt greater things.

Connection Burns Brighter

There are numerous benefits of belonging to a small group. It is within components, districts, and chapters we can grow and be productive by participating in a smaller more intimate group. Being together during an educational offering reminds us of our need for each other while reminding us of our common shared concerns and challenges. When we collaborate in small groups to solve problems, we grow closer. Simple togetherness is a main ingredient of professional growth and love.

Connection is critical for growth and development. If you remove a hot coal from a fireplace and put it on the hearth, what happens? At first it is hot, red, and burning bright, but, with time, that single coal turns

into a cold, dark mass. Like that coal, we burn brightly when we are together, but, with time, we burn out when we stand alone. As we face difficult times, our best strategy is to stay connected.

Connections come in a variety of forms including online meetings and social media. How does it make you feel when you are in an electronic meeting and your screen displays this message “No internet connection” or “Your connection failed”? At times in the past year, I felt sheer panic when I lost my connection during an especially important meeting. While technology promises to connect us, it can also isolate us. As humans, we are constantly preparing for our next meeting, whatever that may be. Weak professional connections are detrimental to our professional life. I have missed being together with my ASPAN family. Personally, I cannot wait to celebrate with you in Philadelphia, in 2022.

We are designed for human connection; hardwired for it. It is a basic human need, and no other entity can come close to the fellowship and support that ASPAN offers the perianesthesia nurse. If ASPAN were a greenhouse for inspiration and vision, you could not stop it from growing. Who would not want to be a part of an organization that is making everyone stronger and more confident, equipping them with the skill and knowledge to succeed? There are so many ways to engage. We have recently endured a year of pandemic, isolation, distance, and separation. It is time to refill our professional tanks through cutting-edge education, clinical practice, and research. So, if you find yourself weary and looking for something more – look to ASPAN.

Simply put, we are better together.

REFERENCES

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3. American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. We are perianesthesia nurses. [Video]. ASPAN – American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses page. February 1, 2017. Accessed July 14, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=delfDhWrPCA>