

IDENTIFICATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH PATIENT AS A CULTURALLY UNIQUE POPULATION IN THE POST-ANESTHESIA CARE UNIT

Team Leader: Christine Tomes, RN, Peri-Operative Education and Research
Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN

Team Member: Victoria Montei, RN, BSN, CNOR; Dawn Woten, RN

Background: Quality care is of utmost concern when a new clientele of Mental Health patients are brought into the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). This unique population has their own specific psychological, physiological and educational needs; therefore, developing an atmosphere to meet these needs is paramount.

Identification of the Problem: Introducing electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) to an adult PACU, which had previously not cared for large groups of Mental Health patients, can cause undue stress on the staff and possibly affect the client's perception of their own procedural experience (1999 Giger and Davidhizar).

Process of Implementation: Literature review, direct observation, Shared Governance focus groups and surveys were used to determine current practice. Gaps observed:

- Understanding of processes for pre, intra and post-procedural care of ECT patients in the PACU.
- Staff education about the Mental Health patients and the ECT procedure.
- Identification of patient/family's pre and post-procedural needs.
- Emotional needs of staff caring for patients receiving a controversial procedure.

Results: Through an evidence based approach, gaps in process were identified and education and standardization of processes were implemented. Staff satisfaction mean scores reflected a significant improvement in the post survey. The impact of the changes on the team was perceived as having enriched the environment and positively affected the patient's perception of the ECT process.

Implications: Identifying Mental Health patients as having their own unique attributes and educating staff about this population can eliminate possible gaps and guide us in giving high quality care to the patients and their families.