

Perioperative Care of Special Needs Adults in the Ambulatory Setting

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Abstract Background Information: Providing neurodivergent adults individualized care within a safe environment is imperative. Complex needs of these patients must be met with the same diligence as the non-special needs adult. There was a necessity to educate staff and implement a plan with the interdisciplinary team to smoothly admit, transfer, and discharge these patients. The Ambulatory Surgical Unit (ASU) is a loud, fast paced, and overstimulating environment. The clinical staff lacked the knowledge to provide care for these patients, which in combination with the environment, led to cancellations and dissatisfaction of the patients and families.

Objectives of Project: Our goal was to provide excellent care and allow this patient population to thrive through the perioperative experience.

Process of Implementation: A literature search showed minimal information for the care of special needs adults in the ASU setting. Cohen Childrens Medical Center, was recognized through Magnet for their innovative Bee Mindful Program. The program was developed in a pediatric setting to address the specific needs of special needs children in the hospital setting. Our team identified that the neurodivergent adult would benefit and thrive from implementing a modified program.

An interdisciplinary team was created to address these challenges. PDSA format was utilized. The BEE Mindful team from Cohens created a modified sensory cart for our patients. Education was provided to staff to care for these patients and the use of the new cart. Patients are cohorted on a single day for continuity of care. Paperwork is completed the night before via telephone to minimize the time the patients are waiting preoperatively. The team, including a dedicated RN to follow the OR for the day, huddles before the first case to formulate an individualized plan for each patient. An isolation room is utilized for a quiet environment. All care is completed in one location to decrease exposure of excess personnel and multiple environments.

Statement of Successful Practice: Implementing the Bee Mindful program improved the experience for our patients, families, and colleagues. This led to decreased cancellations and increased satisfaction of all parties involved.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: This model of care provides the framework for special needs patients to have successful, safe, positive experiences in the perioperative setting.