

Education for Peri Anesthesia Nursing Staff on Caring for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Patients - Insights From a Deaf Nurse

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Abstract Background Information: Hearing loss is a common health condition among society; it can affect anyone from infancy to geriatrics and will continue to be prevalent among patient populations in peri anesthesia. The challenges of hearing loss are variable and often subtle. As a result, the need for specific accommodations can be difficult for a nurse to detect without prior exposure to these nuances. Broadly, information related to communicating with Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH) people is not widely known, and nurses receive little training specific to the provision of care and communication for these patients. Therefore, a knowledge gap was identified.

Objectives of Project: Goals of providing specific education are to increase knowledge, familiarity and competence amongst nursing staff when caring for patients with hearing loss. It also aims to increase patient satisfaction and involvement, and improve overall care in perioperative settings for the D/HH population.

Process of Implementation: Having the perspective as a deaf nurse, I know what information is pertinent in terms of communicating and caring for D/HH patients. Since spring of 2024 I have provided several informal 1-hour presentations, complete with slides, videos, and hands on experiences to teams of staff in the different areas of the perioperative department. Additionally, I created an infographic educational board which highlights relative information pertaining to the unique communication needs of a person with hearing loss.

Statement of Successful Practice: Following my interactive presentations and education board, staff members approached me with further questions and positive feedback. Additionally, several recited new and specific information they learned and will apply in the future. Furthermore, some staff even utilized communication tips when interacting with me after the fact, ie: waving their hand to get my attention. Not only is the information beneficial for providing patient care, but also when interacting with fellow co-workers that may have hearing loss.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Implications of such education include an increase in awareness and comfortability among the peri anesthesia nursing staff when caring for a patient with hearing loss. This will in turn improve the quality of care and experience for D/HH patients, contributing to greater overall health equity among that patient population.