

## **Reducing Preoperative Anxiety: Evidence-Based Non-Pharmacological Interventions**

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**Abstract Background Information:** Preoperative anxiety affects about 60-80% of adults that have a scheduled surgical procedure (Shelb et al., 2025). Patients are in the preoperative department for hours waiting to go back to surgery. Anxiety builds while waiting if not treated. Decreased healing time, higher opioid use during the postoperative phase, and longer hospital stays are adverse effects associated with high levels of anxiety (White and Elvir-Lazo, 2025). The most common management of preoperative anxiety is anxiolytic medications, often given minutes before going back to surgery. However, these medications have a wide range of side effects including drowsiness, cognitive impairment, motor incoordination, and respiratory depression. (UpToDate, n.d.), which limits patients' ability to answer questions or sign consents.

**Objectives of Project:** To review the use of non-pharmacological interventions that can be used in the preoperative department to help with anxiety.

**Process of Implementation:** A search of evidence was conducted utilizing CINAHL and PubMed databases using keyterms of preop, anxiety, surgery, periop, and nonpharmacological. After the search, results were narrowed down to about 15 articles, then down to 8 total articles for literature review. All articles were selected based on nurse-driven, non-pharmacological treatment for patients, full text in English from 2020-2025.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Information about non-pharmacological, nurse-driven treatments for patients was provided to pre-operative staff to understand how they could help reduce anxiety of their patients prior to their procedures. Staff were able to learn about the more common forms of non-pharmacologic intervention and find ways to provide those interventions to staff.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** Pre-operative staff have the duty to care for all patients prior to surgery and although they are often focused on getting the patient to the procedure, anxiety is often overlooked. Anxiety is a common feeling before a surgery, that is not often addressed, so having different tools that nurses can use to help will empower pre-operative nurses to provide holistic care to their patients.