

Enhancing Patient Comfort and Reducing Anxiety Through the Use of Disposable Headphones in the Preoperative Setting

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Abstract Background Information: J1-2 is a cardiac, vascular, and thoracic prep and hold area at the Cleveland Clinic that identified a need to enhance the patient's experience through the introduction of disposable headphones. Each bay within the unit is equipped with a television that provides access to both music channels and cable programming. However, when multiple televisions were used simultaneously, the cumulative noise created a loud and distracting environment that negatively affected both patients and staff. The prep and hold area serve as a critical transition point where patients are prepared physically and psychologically for surgery. It is often the first perioperative environment in which patients experience heightened anxiety, fear, and stress related to anesthesia and surgical procedures. These emotional responses can lead to physiological effects such as elevated blood pressure, increased heart rate, and amplified pain perception, which may contribute to delayed postoperative recovery.

Objectives of Project: The goal of introducing disposable headphones was to reduce environmental noise, alleviate preoperative anxiety, and minimize patient stress before surgery. This patient-centered, non-pharmacologic intervention aimed to promote relaxation and enhance the overall preoperative experience while supporting the holistic care approach central to peri-anesthesia nursing.

Process of Implementation:

- Conducted a needs assessment
- Developed a proposal for leadership review
- Engaged key stakeholders and secured approval
- Piloted the headphone program
- Evaluated patient and staff feedback
- Expanded to full implementation
- Established sustainability measures

Statement of Successful Practice: The introduction of disposable headphones proved to be a highly successful practice that improved patient comfort and staff satisfaction. Patients consistently reported decreased anxiety and described the headphones as calming and reassuring. Nursing staff observed a quieter, more peaceful environment that supported focused care delivery and enhanced patient-nurse interactions

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: This initiative demonstrates how perianesthesia nursing can advance through innovative, evidence-based, and patient-centered practices. The integration of disposable headphones reinforces the nurse's role as an advocate for holistic, compassionate care and highlights the value of small yet impactful interventions that improve the surgical experience.