**Pulse Check: Creating Space for Wellness in Perioperative Nursing**

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**Abstract Background Information:** Perioperative nurses are constantly in motion; transitioning between patients, tasks, and high-stakes responsibilities. In this fast-paced environment, moments for self-care and meaningful connection are rare. Traditional wellness efforts, like posters or wellness weeks, often miss the deeper emotional and relational needs of frontline staff. This initiative was created in response to that gap: a need for intentional, human-centered space to reconnect with purpose, each other, and ourselves.

**Objectives of Project:**

- Introducing simple, actionable wellness strategies for daily use
- Foster honest conversation, emotional support, and trust
- Encourage a mindful presence during the workday
- Strengthen team resilience and connection

**Process of Implementation:** Several times per year, the perioperative team gathers for informal, interactive sessions focused on presence and connection. Activities include:

- Micro-practices like breathing techniques and desk stretches to relieve stress in real time
- "Honest Hour" and "Speed Dating" with open-ended questions that invite vulnerability, deepen communication, and build trust
- Emotional exploration through conversations about emotional intelligence and individual strengths, promoting empathy and respect
- Laughter yoga and skits to foster joy, reduce stress, and reinforce collaboration These exercises reinforced the importance of supporting one another, celebrating strengths, and nurturing trust.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Nurses reported feeling more connected, emotionally supported, and equipped with tools to manage stress during shifts. The sessions created a consistent space for honesty, laughter, and renewal to restore a sense of purpose and humanity to daily work.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** This initiative shows that building a wellness culture does not require major changes. Intentional practices rooted in connection can make a real difference. Integrating emotional and physical wellness into daily routines helps perioperative teams improve engagement, communication, and patient care. This simple, scalable model aligns with ASPAN's mission to promote nurse well-being and excellence. Together we can transform not only how we care for patients but how we care for ourselves and each other. When caregivers thrive, so does healthcare.