

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

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Background

J1-2 is a Cardiac/Vascular/Thoracic Prep and Hold area at the Cleveland Clinic that identified a need for disposable headphones. The bays each have a television which provides music channels and cable. The room becomes very loud when all the bays are using the television simultaneously.

Prep and Hold is a sub sterile unit near the operating rooms. It plays a crucial role in preparing patients physically and psychologically for surgery. It is often the first clinical environment where patients experience heightened anxiety, fear, and stress related to anesthesia and surgical procedures. This can cause physiological responses such as increased blood pressure, heart rate, and pain, as well as delayed recover times post operatively.



Earbuds: For patients without an identified hearing impairment

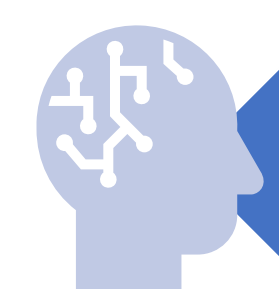
Objectives/Purpose

By introducing headphones to our Prep and Hold area, we aim to reduce anxiety, decrease noise levels, and decrease stress levels before surgery. This can decrease the need for pharmacological intervention and promote nonpharmacological patient centered treatment.

By having patients listen to calm music or guided relaxation we are aiming to:

1. Enhance patient comfort and emotional well-being.
2. Improve overall patient satisfaction.
3. Support nursing staff in providing holistic evidence-based care.
4. Promote a calm and therapeutic environment.
5. Potentially reduce reliance on pharmacological anxiolytics.

Methods



Define the purpose – Perioperative anxiety, distraction, enhance patient experience, potentially reduce the need for anxiolytics or opioids.



Establish safety guidelines – Ensure patient can still hear staff if needed, quick removal capability and ensure continuous monitoring is not impeded.



Infection Control – Use of disposable headphones, allow patient owned devices if possible.



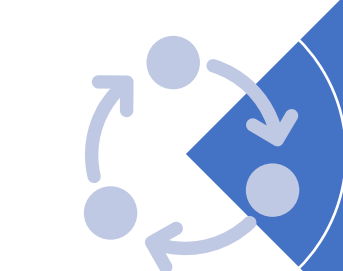
Stakeholder buy in and education – Train staff on identifying a hearing impairment, headphone use, safety, and communication training.



Develop guidelines/protocol - Include exclusions/inclusions, document requirements, and obtain consent (verbal is sufficient).



Pilot program and evaluate – Start with pre-op holding area, track outcomes (anxiety, patient satisfaction, and staff feedback).



Scale and improve – Redefine based on feedback and expand if successful.

Conclusion

The introduction of headphones in the Prep and Hold area proved to be a highly successful practice. Patients stated that the headphones decreased their anxiety and had a calming effect. Nurses felt the room seemed less chaotic and provided a relaxing environment which aided in decreasing anxiety.

References

Zhou, B., Hu, Z. 2004. The Effect of Music Combined With Preoperative Education on Perioperative Anxiety in Patients Undergoing Open Cardiac Surgery: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing* doi: 10.1016/j.jopan.2024.10.0004

Kisielewska, et al. 2025. Decreasing Preoperative Anxiety in Patients with Newly Available Multimodal Approaches-A Narrative Review. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*. Doi.org/10.3390/jcm14092940



Headphones: For patients with an identified hearing impairment