

Pulse Check: Creating Space for Wellness in Perioperative Nursing

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Background

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.

Objective/Purpose

The objectives of this initiative were to:

- Introduce 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



Methods

Session Structure

The perioperative education team, composed of educators in multiple hospitals across the organization, meet quarterly for informal sessions that foster engagement, connection, and collegiality. The following elements were incorporated:

Everyday Wellness Micro-Practices

- Brief breathing techniques
- Desk and standing stretches
- Grounding practices for real-time stress relief during the workday

Connection-Focused Dialogue

- Honest Hour discussions
- Speed Dating–style rotations using open-ended prompts

These formats encouraged vulnerability, deepened communication, and strengthened trust.

Emotional Intelligence Exploration

Guided conversations focused on emotional awareness, empathy, and recognition of individual strengths to promote mutual respect and understanding.

Joy-Based Team Activities

Laughter yoga and skits were used to foster joy, reduce stress, and reinforce collaboration.

Team Impact Reinforcement

All activities emphasized supporting one another, celebrating strengths, and nurturing trust within the team.

Outcomes

Perioperative educators reported strengthened morale, engagement, and peer support during these sessions. They described feeling “**more connected**” and “**emotionally supported,**” and noted being “**better equipped with tools to manage stress.**” Several shared that the sessions provided “**a safe space for honest conversation and reflection.**”

Conclusions

This initiative demonstrates that building a culture of wellness does not require major systemic change. Intentional, connection-based practices embedded into daily workflows can make a meaningful difference for perioperative teams.

- Integrating emotional and physical wellness into routine practice improves engagement and communication
- Simple, low-resource interventions strengthen team resilience and support nurse well-being

When caregivers feel supported and connected, both patient care and the healthcare environment are strengthened.

References

Cleveland Clinic Caregiver Well-Being. Resources. https://ccf.jiveon.com/community/caregiver_wellbeing/pages/resources.