

GRACEful Perioperative Care: Gender Recognition and Affirmative Care Through Education

Background

- Nurses have an ethical responsibility to treat all patients with dignity and respect and to provide culturally and socially sensitive care.
- Nurses provide bedside care and education to patients across the gender continuum, yet rarely receive formal gender-affirming education leading to consequential knowledge gaps.
- This significant lack of training in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) health for providers has created a critical barrier to wellness for these populations.
- Gender-diverse patients report a high rate of negative interactions with healthcare providers across the country. (Rastogi A, Menard L, Miller GH, et al. Health and Wellbeing: A Report of the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey)
- Creating a welcoming environment includes addressing patients by their affirmed gender, name, and pronouns. This information may differ from their legal name and sex in the hospital's electronic health record (EHR).
- The Gender Recognition and Affirmative Care through Education (GRACE) Program was created to address this gap in knowledge and ensure patients receive equitable and culturally competent care.

Objectives

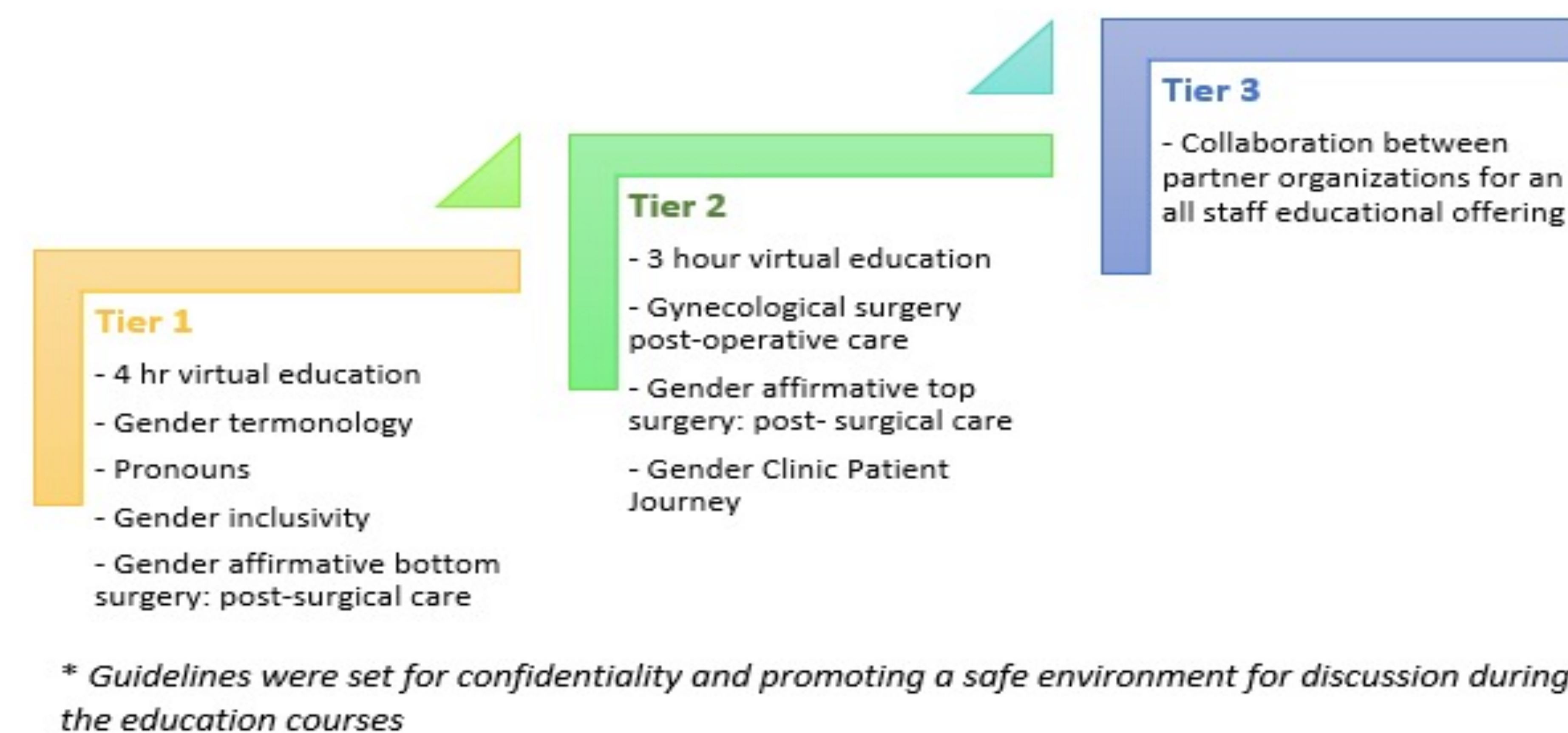
The GRACE Program's goal is to provide interdisciplinary and collaborative education and support for staff to provide affirming, state-of-the-art, evidence-based care that supports each transgender or gender-diverse patient's individual journey. As a collaborative team, we strive to provide care for the physical, emotional, psychological, socio-economic and spiritual wellbeing of our gender-diverse patients.

Acknowledgments

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Process of Implementation

- PACU RNs identified an upcoming gender-affirming surgery for which staff was unfamiliar and requested education. Allied providers were recruited to assist with education development and creation of an extensive educational framework for a group of volunteer nurses to become *GRACE Ambassadors*.
- A tiered educational approach was developed using guidelines from transgender support organizations.



- The education offered a foundational overview of terminology and concepts related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and inclusive language, and provided evidence-based information on caring for the LGBTQ population as well as focused perioperative care.
- During training, participants were provided with a safe forum to ask questions and examine ways to navigate patient or colleague related scenarios.
- After training, Ambassadors were the primary nurses assigned to care for all gender-diverse patients in the perioperative region.
- To support nurses and others caring for gender-diverse patients, the organization's Informatics team modified the EHR to accurately capture each patient's affirmed name and pronouns, promoting consistent use during each care encounter.

For questions please email
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Statement of Successful Practice

- The GRACE Ambassador program ensures nurses have the support and training necessary to continue to deliver excellent and compassionate care to all patients.
- On after class evaluations, nurses indicated they felt more prepared to advocate for and deliver gender-affirming, culturally sensitive, and effective care to gender-diverse patients with 92.3% (n=26) & 89.3% (n=28) strongly recommending the courses.
- Ambassadors serve as a resource to guide other members of the healthcare team in providing a positive healthcare experience for one of our most vulnerable patient populations.
- Our hospital earned a perfect score on the 2024 Human Rights Campaign Foundation Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) which is used by LGBTQ patients and families to find facilities that provide equitable and inclusive care.



Implications for Advancing Perianesthesia Nursing

- There is a vast knowledge gap amongst health care providers when it comes to gender-affirming care. Providing direct education via this 3-tier Ambassador training system helps better prepare providers to care for this vulnerable population and leads to more positive healthcare experiences for both patients and providers.
- Modifying the EHR to accurately capture each patient's affirmed name and pronouns promotes consistent use during each care encounter and ensures patients are receiving equitable and culturally competent care.
- The GRACE program is an adaptable model that can be easily translated to other organizations. Our adult hospital counterpart has successfully adopted this program for their staff education in caring for gender-diverse patients.