

Positive Outcomes from Sensory Aid Retention in the Perioperative Setting

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Background Information: This project was instituted at a Midwest Level 1 Trauma Center in conjunction with their journey to achieve verification as a Geriatric Surgery Center from the American College of Surgeons

Objectives of Project: Create a process allowing surgical patients to retain their sensory aids throughout their surgical experience to improve outcomes and patient satisfaction with no losses of devices.

Process of Implementation: A process was created that encouraged patients to retain any devices required to see, hear and speak. The patients retained their devices in a red Tackle Box. Each Tackle Box had a patient identification card. The patient maintains use of their devices throughout the perioperative experience. In the operating room (OR), the box accompanies the patient on their bed (cart). During surgery, the devices are removed and placed in the red tackle box by the circulating nurse. The tackle box accompanies the patient to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) where PACU nurses place the devices on the patient allowing them to orient to their environment while emerging from anesthesia.

Statement of Successful Practice: From inception in August of 22 through August of 23 over 150 patients were able to retain their sensory aids. During this time there were no devices lost. Anecdotally many patients, family members, nurses and surgeons have positive comments about this process improvement project. Initially the process focused on older adults undergoing a scheduled procedure, however after a few months the project was expanded to include emergent cases and all patients who require a sensory aid. There are still some patients who are reluctant to bring their assistive device for fear of the devices getting lost, but we continue to promote the benefits and share our process for ensuring the safe return of these expensive and valuable devices.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: This project demonstrates that patients may retain their sensory aids and have them safely returned to them. The implication in the Perioperative setting is improved patient communication. The patients are more oriented and able to engage with their environment. The next step is to conduct a prospective mixed methods study that includes surveying patients, families and staff and monitoring for any lost items and patient/family satisfaction.