

**PACU NURSES ARE MY SECOND FAMILY:
BEHAVIORS THAT IMPACT OUR PRACTICE**

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Introduction: Perioperative healthcare teams are charged with efficiently processing a fast paced daily schedule of procedures in a safe and professionally satisfying environment. Behaviors of individual team members influence patient outcomes and the overall success, job satisfaction, and morale of the team.

Identification of the problem: Patient safety is jeopardized when issues both related and unrelated to patient care distract care delivery teams. In addition, negative work cultures contribute to rising healthcare costs by decreasing staff satisfaction resulting in costly turnover.

Purpose of the Study: To identify the perceptions of perianesthesia nurses regarding behaviors that promote or detract from sustaining a safe, efficient, and satisfying work environment.

Methodology: The research team conducted two focus group and seven individual interviews designed to explore the behaviors this team identified as supporting or undermining team success and job satisfaction. The sample consisted of registered nurses (n=14) who work in a pediatric perianesthesia unit.

Results: Nurses described a responsive, engaged healthcare team whose leadership is visible, available, and directive when needed, as creating an effective and satisfying work environment. "A good day... the kids have done well and you've been able to laugh a little... in all the chaos".

Identified concerns were technology distractions, indirect communication, and inequitable work distribution. "I'm twice their age ...doing twice as much work....Funny or grumpy ... I just want them to work". "It can be difficult to make it through the day...because of what is coming at you from co-workers".

Discussion: This team identified that cross-training staff supports efficient flow of resources to areas with the highest need. Inattentive, distracted team members cause frustration, unequal work distribution, delays in care delivery, and undermine patient safety. Mutually respectful communication supports a positive team environment.

Conclusion: Overall, this team was highly satisfied with their job and colleagues, yet identified room for improvement in direct, respectful communication, conflict resolution, work distribution, leadership approaches, and vigilant attention to patient and staff needs.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: Results demonstrate a need to create and sustain consistently respectful perianesthesia work cultures supporting patient safety, job satisfaction and professional growth. Future research focusing on unit specific approaches to work distribution, communication, leadership, and technology use are needed.