



It's Time

By Dean Prentice, DHA, MA, BSN, RN, NE-BC

It has become evident as you talk with colleagues in healthcare, we are in need of some changes. There continues to be a focus on staffing challenges, adjusting to a generational workforce, and shrinking resources, among other issues. Things don't seem to be changing much on the landscape we work in.

So, it's a great time to do something for yourself. Call it self-care. The care I'm talking about though is not about a massage or a vacation, although both would be amazing. It's time for a little self-care on your professional growth.

Complacency tends to overcome our thinking and lulls us into believing we are all good. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell eloquently said "If it isn't broke,

don't fix it" is the slogan of the complacent, the arrogant or the scared. It's an excuse for inaction, a call to non-arms." As we are sitting here thinking nothing is changing or getting better, the same could be said about ourselves.

It's time to get moving. Look for areas in your professional life not going as well as you like. Ask for feedback from your supervisor or trusted colleague on areas where you can improve. Pointedly ask for areas which need to grow or improve. This puts you in a vulnerable position. Trust me, not comfortable. However, if you are going to change, it is imperative you take this step. We sometimes do not see in ourselves what others could easily identify for us.

It's time, maybe, to look for a mentor,

to become a mentor, or step out of your comfort zone at work and look for ways to build your knowledge in your organization. Take a college class or maybe join a volunteer organization that fills a passion of yours. It may be time to join your state's professional nurses association and attend the annual convention. Growth and change can be difficult, but also most rewarding.

No need to continue what you have been doing. Take a chance on change. As Pastor Rick Warren stated, "We are products of our past, but we don't have to be prisoners of it." I think it's time we took care of ourselves and grew a little bit along the way! ■

How Clinical Nurse Specialists are Transforming Health Care

By Tammy Hanks, DNP, APRN, PCNS-BC, NEA-BC, CNOR, OACNS Director-at-Large for Membership



The magic of being a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) is in the numerous opportunities and expanse of influence the role

provides. Especially for those nurses who find themselves passionate about specialized or niche patient populations, the CNS

role provides an avenue to expand knowledge, expertise, and practice without having to leave the area of nursing that you love. As a perioperative RN, I faced a dilemma when I realized that pursuing an advanced degree would likely take me out of the operating room (OR). Luckily, I stumbled upon the CNS role and realized that my perfect fit was the pediatric perioperative CNS role.

I have been in a variety of positions since becoming a pediatric CNS, including pediatric perioperative CNS, pediatric sur-

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must also be dedicated to educating staff by providing training, auditing interventions, incorporating assessment tools, involving the patient, and using debriefing techniques (The Joint Commission, 2019).

Some useful tips to practice when confronting an agitated patient are:

- Stay at least 2 arms-length away.
- Maintain a relaxed posture and look.
- Speak calmly with visible hands.
- Acknowledge what the patient is saying.
- Do not threaten.
- Set clear boundaries.
- Refrain from using medical argon.
- Be non-judgmental.
- Show empathy.
- Use the patient's name.
- Be ok with silence – This allows the patient time to reflect and calm down.
- Do not argue.
- Define consequences of behavior.
- Be respectful.
- Do not answer inappropriate questions.

- Treat the patient with dignity.
- Use trauma-informed care (Hilton, 2022)

Nurses should be equipped with the appropriate de-escalation tools such as the assessment tools and de-escalation models for their type of work setting and should be provided with the support needed by upper management to be able to maintain a calm and therapeutic work environment for the medical staff, the patients, and their families. Workplace safety should always be a priority for all members of the medical staff. Continuous training and staying ahead of the latest research are critical to maintaining a safe, stress-free, and healthy work environment. ■

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gery APRN, system-level director of nursing research and evidence-based practice, director of quality, and chief nursing officer. Throughout my various roles, I directly and indirectly influenced perioperative patients and nursing practice. However, my current role at the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN) truly highlights the impact and influence of the CNS role. As a perioperative practice specialist, I contribute as an author of AORN's Guidelines for Perioperative Practice and AORN Journal Clinical Issues column. I also offer expert perioperative consultation to AORN members worldwide via the nurse consult line and contribute to a variety of AORN projects. In this role, I am directly contributing to the body of work that informs perioperative nursing practice and use my collective CNS experience to impact perioperative nursing

and patient outcomes at a national and international level.

It can be difficult to define the role of the CNS, but that is because it can look like many different things. Whether a CNS is a provider, educator, leader, administrator, consultant, or a combination of roles, there is magic in knowing that becoming a CNS can take you anywhere. If you are passionate about a specialized patient population and want the opportunity to impact nursing and patient care at all levels, the CNS role might be for you.

What is a CNS?

Clinical Nurse Specialists are Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN). Like other APRNs, CNSs are prepared with either a master's or doctoral degree and diagnose, prescribe, and treat patients. Like other APRNs, CNS education programs include the "3 P's" in their gradu-

ate courses: Advanced pathophysiology, physical assessment, and pharmacology (APRN Consensus Work Group, 2008). The CNS improves outcomes by providing direct patient care, leading evidence-based practice, optimizing organizational systems, and advancing nursing practice (NACNS, 2024). ■

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