

OR Manager Conference**Building cohesion, community,
and commitment across multiple
generations working in the OR**

Managing today's multigenerational perioperative workforce can seem daunting, but understanding the strengths of each group and knowing how best to communicate with them can turn challenges into opportunities.

The first step toward promoting generational interrelationships—and to better manage perioperative services for the future—is to “create a generational profile of your OR employees to determine the breakdown by generation,” says Rose Sherman, EdD, RN, NEA-BC, CNL, FAAN.

For example, Generation X dislikes long meetings, so keep them pertinent and short. Generation Y likes the technology in the OR and embraces the notion of teamwork. Focusing on this aspect of the OR can help in recruiting new nurses. (To learn more about the different generations, see related article on p 14.)

Sherman, associate professor in the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing at Florida Atlantic University and director of the Nursing Leadership Institute, will discuss generational issues in perioperative services during a general session at the OR Manager Conference September 23-25 at the Gaylord National Resort in National Harbor, Maryland, near Washington, DC.

A generational profile can also help identify potential hiring biases, Sherman says. “If you have only 10% of Generation X and Generation Y employees, what does that mean for your succession planning?” She cautions that OR managers sometimes wrongly assume their staff aren't interested in management positions. “Reach out and ask them. They might say no at first, but they will think about what you say.”

Successful generation management means creating a healthy work environment. Sherman says her research shows that younger nurses won't tolerate a toxic culture. “If a Generation Y nurse doesn't like the culture, she is out of there,” she says.

The sense of belonging to a community is important, and it can be difficult for a young nurse in the OR, says Sherman. The nurse may be 25 years old in an environment where the average age is over 50 and co-workers are focused on retirement. “You need to build a sense of community, or they will feel isolated.” Sherman recommends managers ask themselves how inclusive they are with the different generations.

Succession planning and work environment will compel OR managers to ask questions such as: Is there another way to do scheduling so that it's more appealing to those in different generations? Does the environment provide the mentoring that's needed? How can on-call be managed so it's less intrusive on work/life balance? The answers may be difficult but are essential for long-term success.

To learn more, sign up for Sherman's session, “Leading a Multigenerational Perioperative Workforce.” She will provide evidence-based information about each generational cohort and insights on leadership strategies to build team synergy. Case scenarios using real-time problems also will be discussed.

Register online at www.ormanager.com. ❖



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