

5th International Conference on

Pediatric Nursing and Healthcare

July 11-12, 2016 Cologne, Germany

Use of the neonatal integrative developmental care model to transform caregiving culture in the neonatal intensive care unit

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American author Leo Buscaglia once stated that “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” This quote rings especially true for skilled healthcare professionals working in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) setting. In preparation for the departure from an older, traditional open-bay NICU to a newly-designed unit comprised of single-family rooms, Mercy Kids Hospital (Springfield, Missouri, USA), NICU co-workers sought transformation: of caregiving attitudes, care practice, and outcomes for hospitalized infants and their families. Beyond identifying what equipment should be transferred to the new unit, team members in the NICU at Mercy-Springfield began examining what aspects of care should be transferred as well – or possibly left behind. NICU staff verbalized a desire to change not only the physical environment, but also their culture of caregiving by embarking on a journey toward improved neuroprotective family-centered developmentally supportive care. Utilizing the neonatal integrative developmental care model as a framework, Mercy-Springfield identified specific goals and aim statements within each of the model's seven core measures. The purpose of this presentation is to explicate how Mercy-Springfield used this model to (1) critically and honestly reflect on current care practice, and to (2) transform the NICU environment, increase family partnership in caregiving, improve positioning and handling practice, safeguard infant sleep, minimize infant stress and pain, protect skin integrity, and optimize nutrition.

Biography

Ashlea D Cardin has been a pediatric and neonatal Occupational Therapist at Mercy Kids Hospital, Springfield, MO, USA, for over 16 years. She is Board Certified in Pediatrics by the American Occupational Therapy Association, certified to administer the Neonatal Oral Motor Assessment Scale, is designated as a Neonatal Developmental Care Specialist by the National Association of Neonatal Nurses, and serves as a Consultant for Philips Healthcare's Global Wee Care Program. She is also an Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy at Missouri State University, teaching pediatrics, research, and theory courses.

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