

Adaptive teams, resilient staff, safe patients: The Circle Up[®] system of communication and coordination

Psychological support and daily workflow adaptation for COVID-19 and beyond
Center for Medical Simulation, Boston, MA

Overview

When our strictly designed and organized hospitals crash into an ever-changing and uncertain environment there are unintended negative consequences—stress and burnout, inefficiency, and increased risks for patients and caregivers. In the face of procedures, policies and workflows that change daily, we urgently need a simple way to adapt and a reliable way to support the resilience of staff.



Managing workflow changes

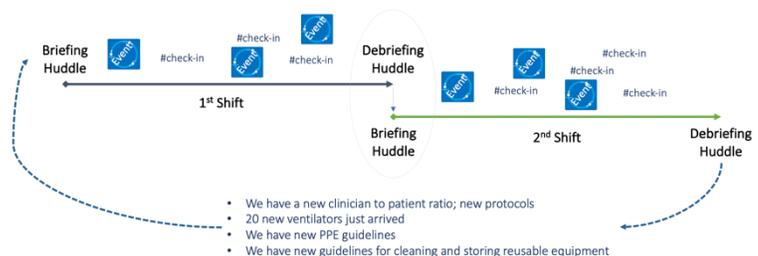
To do this, Circle Up provides structured briefings, peer check-ins and debriefings for unit-level shifts or for complex individual care episodes (e.g. proning a critically ill patient). Briefings incorporate new information, encourage shared planning, and allow mental rehearsal at the beginning of shifts. Peer check-ins create a culture of noticing, helping and supporting. Debriefings distill lessons learned, provide space to process emotionally challenging situations and a chance to figure out what is needed. A purposeful approach to capturing and implementing innovations supports rapid adaptation and practice improvement.

Supporting ourselves and our peers' well-being

Protecting the psychological health of colleagues, like protecting their physical health, is both a practical and resilience imperative. Waiting until people are psychologically depleted to offer reactive support for well-being is risky for patients and bad for staff. Consistent briefings, peer support check-ins, and debriefings provide needed predictability and peer connection in the midst of constant change.

Intelligent information—capturing and supporting the flow of change

Circle Up creates a beating heart and circulation of adaptive conversation, problem-solving and exchange of information between shifts and among teams, so that the learning of the moment becomes the learning of the organization.



We currently support clinicians and organizations in using Circle Up for peer support and workflow adaptation through training, toolkits, and advisory services in Boston, Belgium, Spain, France, Australia, Hong Kong, Brazil.