



## Gratitude and Appreciation

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Chronic stress in health care providers and its impact on their physical and mental health has been linked to increased rates of burnout and depression.<sup>1</sup> **Gratitude interventions** lead to a reduction in perceived stress; practicing and developing a focus on gratitude has been linked to improvements in all aspects of well-being.<sup>2,3</sup> In addition, enhancing these practices has a positive effect on patient services.<sup>2</sup> Expressed gratitude also has a powerful positive effect on the giver of gratitude.

### Benefits of Gratitude<sup>4</sup>

Medical	Psychological	Social (in adolescents)
Improved sleep	Increased happiness & satisfaction	Increased interest in school lives
Less fatigue	Less materialism burnout & depression	Increased kindness, helpfulness, social integration
Less cellular inflammation	Improved resilience following traumatic events	Increased expressions of appreciation

### Gratitude Practice Development Approaches<sup>5</sup>

<b>Reflect on the Positive:</b> Three good things/gratitude journal.
<b>Gratitude Letter:</b> Write and deliver a heartfelt note to someone who you never properly thanked.
<b>Mental Subtraction of Positive Event or Important Relationship:</b> Imagine if a part of your life turned out different. It helps focus on how much you might have taken for granted.
<b>Give it up:</b> Try depriving yourself of something you truly like; when you allow it again, you realize how much you enjoy it.
<b>Savoring Walk:</b> Spend time outside and note the sights/sounds/smells that you particularly enjoy, and think about why.

**Appreciation** has also been shown to lead to increased wellness and decreased burnout in the workplace.<sup>6</sup> In fact, feeling appreciated at work is tightly tied to employee feelings of loyalty, being the most important factor noted for staying with an employer.<sup>7</sup> Job satisfaction is higher when employees are shown they are appreciated.<sup>8</sup>

Project Idea: Create an “**Appreciation and Gratitude Board**”

- Place the board in an area where staff will pass on a regular basis.
- Communicate the board’s purpose to the entire perioperative staff (send reminders to encourage participation).
- Collect and distribute the “harvest” of comments to the perioperative team.
- Make it easy: attach bins with cards and pens to the board.



### References

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