



## MICROAFFIRMATIONS: More Than Being Nice

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Unique challenges persist within the perioperative space. The pediatric operating room is a high-stakes environment with high stress, limited flexibility, and curt responses that can hinder constructive responses and lead to unacceptable behaviors. Recent efforts have focused on recognizing implicit biases and fostering a more inclusive culture.

We propose an antidote: microaffirmations—an authentic, deliberate, and specific action or statement to promote inclusion and support of the community and team around you. Microaffirmations transform culture, promote professional fulfillment, and decrease burnout. In an era where negativity bias can dominate our perceptions, microaffirmations can provide a positive counterbalance, benefiting our colleagues and patients. This shift toward recognizing and affirming positive behaviors can enhance the working environment and improve overall well-being.

### Definition

Microaffirmations are tiny acts that promote inclusion, such as acknowledging contributions and providing support during distress.<sup>1</sup>

### Examples

Acknowledging Contributions	A nurse introduces herself to a patient with severe anxiety during a preoperative call. An anesthesiologist praises the nurses' initiative, reinforcing her role in enhancing the patient's experience.
Building on Strengths	After a challenging sedation case, a clinician publicly thanks a colleague for her calm support. This recognition boosts morale and reinforces a culture of appreciation that can reduce burnout.
Standing up for Others	When a resident raises concern about a patient's temperature, an attending Anesthesiologist supports him against a dismissive attending surgeon. This act encourages the trainee to advocate for patient safety and fosters open communication.

### Benefits



### Conclusions

Microaffirmations, though small, can significantly impact workplace culture and enhance the well-being of healthcare professionals. As we strive for a better environment in perioperative medicine, let's focus on these simple acts of support that can create a more inclusive and safe space for everyone. Embracing microaffirmations can transform interactions, leading to better outcomes for both colleagues and patients.

### References

1. Rowe, M. Microaffirmations and micro-inequities. Journal of International Ombudsman Association. 2008; 1: 45-48. [Link](#)
2. Estrada M, Young GR, Nagy J, et al. The Influence of Microaffirmations on Undergraduate Persistence in Science Career Pathways. CBE Life Sci Educ. 2019;18(3):ar40. [PubMed](#)
3. Roberts H. Use microaffirmations and call out microaggressions to help others. Nature. 2021. [PubMed](#)