



# Achieving Work-Life Balance in an Ambulatory Surgery Center

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## Background

- Considerable research has shown that an adequate work-life balance is necessary for job satisfaction and retention.
- Paid Time Off (PTO) is part of work-life balance.
- The process of requesting PTO can be cumbersome and unreliable, resulting in frustration of nursing staff.
- The purpose of the study was to identify modifiable factors that influence what was important to the staff regarding the current method used to request PTO and identify specific frustrations.

## Methodology

### Study Approval:

- University of Mount Olive Institutional Review Board
- Duke University Health System Institutional Review Board

### Study Design:

- Structured around the Revised Nursing Work Life Model (Manojlovich & Laschinger, 2007).
- Non Experimental, mixed methods.
- Qualitative approach, using ethnographic focus groups.
- 18- item survey developed from themes in focus groups.

### Setting:

- Ambulatory Surgical Center located in central North Carolina.
- The surgery center is open Monday – Friday from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Staff are assigned to work in the OR, Pre-op Unit, or Post-Op Unit.
- There is one nurse manager for the facility.

### Sample:

- Registered Nurses, Three Focus Groups consisting of 15 RNS, purposive sampling based on work area and role within the facility.
- Nursing Assistants, Scrub Technicians, and Sterile Processors.
- 18- item survey developed from focus group results; distributed to 42 staff members with a response rate of 92%.

## Data Collection

- Analysis and coding of Focus Group Transcripts
- Common themes were used to develop survey.
- Survey was distributed to 42 staff members.

## Data Analysis

Four Major Themes developed from Focus Groups:

- Stressfulness of PTO process
- Job Empowerment
- Staffing
- Leadership



Table 1

Themes from focus groups

Major Themes		Sub-themes
Process is stressful		Required paid time off (PTO) request process time is too early The process is not conducive to work-life balance
Job Empowerment		Too few people guaranteed off It is time to change the policy
Staffing		Separating Operating Room Staff from Peri-operative staff We need to allow an additional person to be guaranteed off
Leadership		The request process is unfair The policy is not strictly adhered to Will leadership consider a change in the policy?



## Key Findings

- Staff dissatisfied with PTO process.
- Stress that staff is subjected to using the PTO request process.

### Staff Preferences:

- Change PTO request process.
- Increased autonomy in scheduling decisions.
- Increased job satisfaction.

## Implications for Today's Nursing Practice

Increased communication between management and staff can foster:

- Improved work life balance.
- Increased job satisfaction work life balance.
- Healthy work environment.
- Increased recruitment and retention of nurses.

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## References

Available upon request