

Multi-Professional Briefings

A Guide for Medical Practitioners



Developed by the SWANS Research Team



What are Multi-Professional Briefings?

Multi-professional briefings are short 3 – 5 minute meetings before the start of an operating list. These meetings include all professional groups working in the operating theatre that day.

Multi-professional briefings are designed to facilitate effective communication and coordination between team members, and support theatre efficiency and safety. They involve proactive planning to ensure efficiency, and they help surgical teams to set a collaborative tone for the day.

The briefings include all professional groups working in operating theatres (i.e. surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, and technicians). They can be initiated and led by any staff member. They only take up a couple of minutes at the start of surgical lists.

Research evidence shows that briefings:

- Improve the flow and ease of surgical lists
- Help make working in operating theatre less stressful, more predictable, and more enjoyable for staff
- Enhance patient safety.

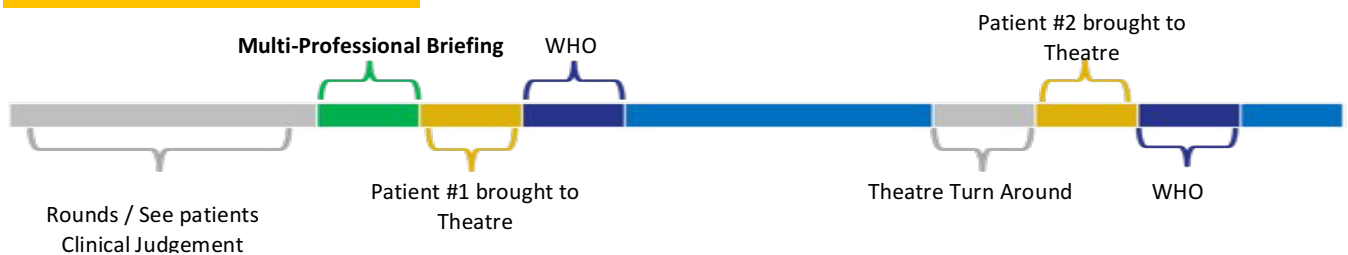


The multi-professional briefings are simply one step added to the usual process in theatre, conducted before the first patient is brought in.

Without Briefings



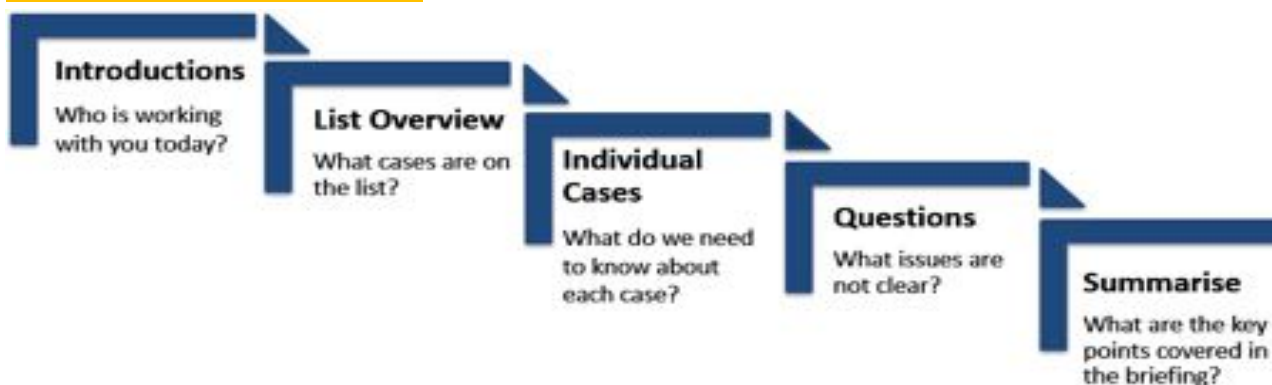
With Briefings



Our approach: A five-step process to improving communication

Typical briefings consist of five steps to facilitate efficient exchange of information as well as a free flowing conversation. These steps provide an overview of the overall list, as well as details of individual cases.

Briefing steps



Step 1: Introductions

Introductions of team members' names and roles familiarise staff with each other. This step clarifies everyone's roles and builds a team spirit.

Step 2: List Overview

List overview focuses on the number of cases, the list duration, and turnaround times. This step provides everyone with an idea of what kind of work to expect.

Step 3: Individual Cases

Case review provides more detailed information on each case. It clarifies roles, expected complexities, potential complications, equipment requirements, and team member level of experience with procedures. Based on the individual case review, changes to the list order that will enhance workflow can be identified before the first patient is called.

Step 4: Questions

Questions are then welcomed by all staff members to clarify any issues.

Step 5: Summarise

Summarising any changes that were made to the list order and any notable issues reminds the team of key issues that have been discussed.

"Briefings significantly contributed to an improved culture of communication in theatre in our hospital. The briefings definitely improves efficiency, avoid problems and improve the work of the team."
-Anesthetist Consultant



Team briefing steps:

- Have we **introduced** Team members (names & roles)?
- Did we provide a **list overview**, including:
 - Number of cases
 - List duration
 - Turnaround times
- Did we **discuss cases**?
 - Roles for each case
 - Expected complexities
 - Potential complications
 - Equipment requirement
 - Team member level of experience with procedures
 - Changes to the list order
- Did we open the floor for **questions**?
- Did we **summarise** any changes and the overall list?

Who initiates?

The briefings can be initiated by any of the staff members. These multi-professional briefings are everyone's briefings.

Who leads?

The briefings can be led by any of the staff members. We would advise staff to take turns in leading the briefing, however it is no issue if the same individuals lead the briefings. Leadership can also shift during the course of each briefing.

About the SWANS Project

The research behind multi-professional briefings

The information given in this booklet is based on research carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of researchers and medical practitioners at the University of Western Australia. For the research, data were collected in collaboration with four major hospitals in Western Australia. The research team carried out in-theater observations and engaged staff via surveys.

The research was conducted to understand the effects of briefings and coordination between professional groups, specifically in the areas of problem solving and speaking up, helping and offering support, information exchange, and proposing changes.

This project was funded by the Western Australian Department of Health.

The Research Team

The research and the guidelines provided in this booklet were developed and implemented by a team of psychologists and medical practitioners. The team brings together in-depth understanding of how people work together effectively and how these work practices can best be implemented in a medical context.



For more information on this project and other work conducted by the SWANS team, please visit our website:

nontechnicalskills.org

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