

Strategies to Make Your Lab *Excellent*

Madeline Jankowski, ACS, RDCS, FASE



@maddiejane25

#EchoHawaii

Overview

- 1. Leadership**
- 2. Lab Structure**
- 3. Communication**





Leadership



Leadership

Manager

Planning/Budget

Resources/timelines

Day to day focus

Staffing

Problem solving

Control

Leader

Establish direction and vision

Community/team building

Motivate and inspire

Develop strategy

Empower

Provides opportunities

**In healthcare, we need BOTH managers
and leaders that work together, but
*who holds the energy?***



How do we elevate people?

- **Providing opportunities - making “I’ve got places to go” — “I’ve got places to grow”**
 - Growth increases employee satisfaction and retention
- **Giving other people opportunities *does not make you lesser***
 - Actually makes you more valuable to the company
- **Seeing qualities in others and elevate those strengths**



Sonographer vs. Tech

- **Seemingly simple...with big implications**
- **Mutual respect**
- **Finding value in your career, not just a job**



MDs advocating for Sonographers

- **In many institutions, MDs pull more weight with administrators**
 - **Market analysis - look at other institutions in your area for competitive pay ranges**
 - **Time for studies - as we add to our protocols, we need to fight for more time - Quality > Quantity**



Lab Structure



Sonographer Levels / Career Pathway

- **Sonographer Career ladder**

- **Discussed in Bremer's blue pages (2020)** "Advancement through a clinical ladder is typically achieved by meeting defined criteria for skills and competence, educational accomplishments, and professional participation"
- **Adopted by Kaiser Permanente system (Wilson and Cooley 2006)** – discussed wage scale for levels
- **Ladder varies per institution**
- **Offers career pathway – engages employees and increases retention and job satisfaction**

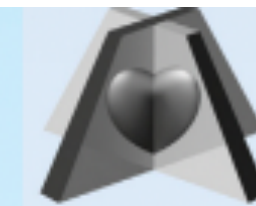
- **ACS**

- **Introduced and discussed in 2009 by leading sonographers in our field (Mitchell, et al)**
- **CCI offers advanced credentialing**
- **Where is this used? Where could it be used?**

Advanced Cardiovascular Sonographer: A Proposal of the American Society of Echocardiography Advanced Practice Sonographer Task Force

Carol Mitchell, PhD, RDMS, RDCS, RVT, RT(R), FASE, Fletcher A. Miller, Jr., MD, FASE, S. Michelle Bierig, MPH, RDCS, FASE, Merri L. Bremer, MEd, RN, RDCS, FASE, Donna Ehler, BS, RDCS, FASE, Timothy Hanlon, MD, FASE, Daren Keller, BS, RDCS, Claudia E. Korcarz, DVM, RDCS, FASE, Judy R. Mangion, MD, FASE, Jane E. Marshall, BS, RDCS, FASE, Marti L. McCulloch, BS, RDCS, FASE, Brad Mehl, BA, RDCS, RVT, RDMS, RT(R), FASE, Rick Rigling, BS, RDCS, FASE, Cassie Robbins, RDCS, FASE, Liza Sanchez, RCS, and Matt M. Umland, RDCS, FASE, *Madison, Wisconsin; St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri; Rochester, Minnesota; Bend, Oregon; Durham, North Carolina; Boston, Massachusetts; Houston, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Danbury, Connecticut; Alexandria, Virginia; Anthem, Arizona*

JASE 2009



SONOGRAPHERS' COMMUNICATION Clinical Ladders as a Professional Development Tool

Merri Bremer, EdD, RN, ACS, RDCS, FASE
JASE 2020



Equipment

- **As advanced as per budget**
- **When buying new machine/upgrading software, dedicate lab time to train**
 - **Sonographers for acquisition and knobology**
 - **Physician training for reading the new technology - *no point of doing it if it's not going to be useful and diagnostic!***
 - **CPT codes for strain and 3D imaging - hard work pays off**



Consistency in scanning/reporting

- **Follow ASE guidelines - a reliable place to go to for updates, consistency in technique, measurements, and analysis**
 - **Free to all – not just members**
- **Meaningful QA to address discrepancies in scanning/reporting**
 - **IAC standards - evaluate a minimum of 2 studies/modality/quarter**
 - **If no QA process in place, IAC offers an online QI evaluation, but adapt to your lab (these are the MINIMUM standards)**
- **Scan labs for hands-on practice**
 - **Managers should ask staff about goals during evaluations**



Case Review

- **The goal is to discuss interesting/difficult/confusing cases that teach us to be better**
- ***NOT a QA session!***
- **Gets sonographers/trainees more practice “speaking the echo language”**
- **Looking at the *process*, not putting blame**
- **Is there anything that we could’ve done better?**
- **Allows to build for best practices/themes**





Communication



Feedback

What feeling comes to mind when I say the word feedback?

How do we take the bad connotation out of that word?

- **How to give it**
- **How to receive it**
- **Timing of feedback loop**



Change Management

People don't resist change, they resist being changed - Peter Senge

Be as transparent as you can

- **Concrete things - talk openly, give rationale, update in a timely matter**



**No matter how excellent a place is,
it can always get better.**

