Teambuilding in a Pediatric Acute Care Unit and the Perceptual Impact on Psychological Safety

PURPOSE
The purpose of the DNP project was to improve the perception of psychological safety in nurses on a pediatric acute care unit through the implementation of targeted teambuilding activities. The goal of the project was to increase the perception of nursing psychological safety by 8% of pre-intervention baseline.

BACKGROUND
The project was implemented on a 22-bed general medicine pediatric unit at a freestanding pediatric system in Southeast, Texas.

METHODOLOGY
A Likert scale survey was used to assess the perception of psychological safety in nurses. Commonly used questions to assess the perception of the psychological safety were included in the survey. An Ishikawa (fishbone) diagram was used to establish the cause and effect of psychological safety in nurses on the unit, followed by the completion of a SWOT analysis to develop targeted interventions. Nurses voluntarily participated in teambuilding activities that focused on team familiarity, group cohesion, and colleague trust; all factors cited as being pre-conditions to psychological safety. Descriptive statistics such as median, percentages, and p values were used to analyze results. Additionally, teambuilding activity nursing participation levels were tracked during project implementation.

RESULTS
Twenty-five out thirty-six nurses participated in the first of three teambuilding activities. Twenty-two out of thirty-six nurses participated in the second teambuilding activity. Participation levels were not tracked for the third activity. A 5% increase in the perception of psychological safety was realized, 3% points lower than the project aim. Staff and unit leaders report an increase in effective communication and team collaboration as a result of the project.

IMPLICATIONS
Teambuilding is an effective strategy to support accelerated team performance, assist in goal attainment, and foster effective communication. While additional research is needed to understand the relationship between teambuilding and psychological safety, leveraging teambuilding to support group cohesion and team familiarity have proven increase team productivity and promote job satisfaction.