The Surgical Experience: Initial Questions to Ask

- Are first impressions for the surgical experience positive, welcoming, and reassuring to the patient and family?

- Is preoperative planning and scheduling handled in a manner supportive of the patient and family?

- Are there a variety of means for patients and families to obtain information before, during, and after surgery (e.g., tours, virtual tours, handbooks, access to a patient and family resource center)?

- If the patient or family wishes, is there the opportunity to talk with others who have had a similar surgical procedure?

- Are patients and families encouraged to be partners in assuring safety during the entire surgical experience?

- Is there specific support/preparation prior to surgery for:
  - Adult patients and their families?
  - Children and adolescent patients?
  - Children whose family members are having surgery?

- Do patients and family members have opportunities to share insights, observations, and questions in the patient’s chart during rounds and other discussions regarding care and with individual care providers?

- Is attention paid to what the patient experiences at every phase of the surgical process (i.e., What does the patient see, hear, smell, and feel)?

- Is there a dedicated surgical liaison to facilitate contact and share information with families throughout the surgical experience?

- Is there a secure place for patients and families to store personal belongings?

- Does the pre-surgical waiting area provide comfort and privacy for patients and families?
Are there separate pre-surgical waiting areas for inpatients and ambulatory patients?

Is there a pre-surgical play space for pediatric patients?

Are patients and families given the option to remain together in the:
  - Pre-anesthesia holding area?
  - Induction area?
  - Post-anesthesia care area?

Is preparation provided to the patient and family for post-surgical and post-discharge care in useful and affirming ways?

Is there written discharge information provided to patients and families that is tailored to their specific care needs, linguistic needs, questions, and concerns?

Does a representative of the surgical team or unit contact each patient and family within 24 - 48 hours after discharge?

Is there a 24-hour hotline available to patients, family, and community caregivers after discharge?

To assure consistency and coordination of care, is information about the surgical experience shared with the patient’s primary care provider in a timely manner?

Are patients and families involved as advisors in:
  - Defining, planning, and evaluating the surgical experience?
  - Enhancing the quality and safety of the surgical experience?
  - Developing patient and family handbooks and other information and support resources?
  - Providing peer-to-peer support?
  - Serving as paid surgical liaisons?
  - Training surgical staff about the patient and family surgical experience?