Theatre Team Briefing and Debrief Guide

Human factors prompts for the start and end of an operating list. A short, structured conversation builds a shared plan, makes it easier to speak up and captures lessons while they are fresh. Use it alongside, not instead of, the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist and your local policies.

Team briefing: before the list starts

Prompt	Done
Everyone introduces themselves by name and role.	
The lead walks through the list, the order and any changes.	
Patient-specific concerns are raised for each case.	
Equipment, implants and blood products needed are confirmed as available.	
Anticipated critical events and contingency plans are agreed.	
Roles are clear if things go wrong, including who calls for help.	
The lead explicitly invites anyone to speak up at any time if they have a concern.	

Team debrief: at the end of the list

Prompt	Done
What went well today?	
What could we do better next time?	
Were there any equipment, staffing or process problems?	
Is there anything that should be reported or escalated?	
Who will follow up each action, and by when?	

Actions from the debrief

Issue	Action	Owner	By when

Speaking up. A simple, agreed phrase such as "I need you to stop and listen" helps any team member raise a concern quickly, whatever their seniority. Agree yours at the briefing.

General guidance only. Adapt it to your organisation's own policies, procedures and legal or regulatory requirements before use.