Strategies to Grow and Sustain a Competency Assessment Model Utilizing the Quality Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) in the Clinical Setting

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Background
• In the practice setting, a comprehensive measurement of competency assessment is essential upon orientation and ongoing education of clinical staff. As the Institute of Medicine (IOM) identified criteria for nursing to provide safe quality patient care, it became apparent the use of a traditional skills checklist was not an accurate measurement of competency.
• This shifted the thought process from measuring skills to a more comprehensive approach including knowledge, skills and attitudes. A review of the literature was completed and QSEN provided the framework for the competency assessment model.

Objectives
• Illustrate the integration of Quality Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) into a clinical competency assessment
• Outline the process of development, growth & sustainability strategies
• Identify pearls & pitfalls when introducing an innovative competency process

Framework
The six core QSEN competencies offer a common interprofessional language to build a safe practice environment.
• Patient-Centered Care
• Teamwork and Collaboration
• Evidence-based Practice
• Quality Improvement
• Safety
• Informatics

Four Phases
Phase I A task force was formed and based on a review of the literature the basic competency assessment, utilizing the six Institute of Medicine (IOM) criteria, focused on knowledge, skills & attitudes (KSA) was developed. Sections for learner self-assessment, method of instruction, and validation of competency were built into the tool and it was piloted.

Phase II A formative evaluation was conducted with preceptors and new hires, which identified a knowledge gap about QSEN, as well as utilization of the tool. Foundational education around QSEN, KSA, and the definition of competency was provided to stakeholders. Additional education on the roles & responsibilities of the Learner, Preceptor and Educator/Manager was provided and built into our Preceptor Workshops for sustainability. Once the basic tool (Tier I) was approved development continued into what is now a three tiered comprehensive competency assessment process. Tier II was designed, collaboratively, around patient populations i.e. Acute or Critical Care and Tier III addresses unit specific competencies.

Phase III Introduced the expansion of the competency tool to nursing support staff and other clinical disciplines. This prompted additional investigation into scope of practice, standards and policy as they related to delegation and roles

Phase IV Was the creation of the sustainability process including a three year revision cycle. Over the past four years this competency assessment work has flourished from a basic nursing assessment tool into an inter-professional framework. This work will continue to expand as we explore new opportunities.

What is Competency?
“Competency is an expected level of performance that integrates, knowledge, skills, abilities and judgment.”

“Habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skill, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and the community being served.”

Innovation & Change
• Provided concept to Professional Development Council
• Recruited competency assessment task force
• Developed basic competency assessment tool
• Reviewed four phases of implementation

Pears & Pitfalls
Pearls
Quality: Standardized language, Shared Governance approach, define competency, stated ownership expectations, inclusion of ambulatory
Financing/QSEN supports transition to practice. No change in length of orientation, Sustainability- removal of brand names, Small steering group able to advise/assist with unit specific needs
Education: Ease of transition from academia to practice
Change: Alignment of competency tool outside the DON, key stakeholders involved risk management/leadership

Reference & Disclosure
Strategic Agenda for Change (SAC), Anschutz Medical Campus, CO 2014-2016

Innovations
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Epstein, 2002
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