Achieving Competency

MNASCA

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Objectives

- Describe the influence of competency on patient safety

- List nine steps to developing a competency assessment program

- Discuss competency validation methodologies

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Impact of an Inadequate Competency Program

- Medical Errors

- Adverse Events

- Survey Deficiencies

- Patient Satisfaction

- Employee Satisfaction

- Litigation

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Examples

- Medication Administration

- Medication Reconciliation

- Patient Assessment

A nurse's ability to be a critical thinker and to use this knowledge in the delivery of nursing care is essential to the well being and safety of those for whom nurses care.

It is a nurse's professional responsibility to remain safe and competent by being a lifelong learner.

Developing Competency Assessment Program

1. Establish the mission/vision/values statements according to the strategic plan – foundation upon which staff competencies are built

- Mission: Describes the overall purpose of the facility
- Vision: States what the facility aspires to
- Values: Serves as a compass for staff behaviors that supports the culture of the facility

Mission

To care for our patients, serve our physicians, and improve healthcare in America

Vision

To be the *partner of choice* for surgical care

Values

Clinical Quality, Integrity, Service Excellence, Teamwork, Accountability & Continuous Improvement

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Competence assessment in nursing cannot solely be based on demonstration of theoretical content knowledge or technical skills but should also involve some analysis about a candidate's attitudes and practice.

Developing Competency Assessment Program

2. Establish a competency policy

- Address:
  - Initial competency validation program
  - Orientation process for the facility, each department and each position/role
  - Age-specific competencies
  - Annual competency validation program
  - Methods for maintaining competency data
  - Who is responsible
  - Time frame for completion

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Developing Competency Assessment Program

3. Establish competency-based job descriptions
   - Job summary
   - Qualifications
   - Physical demands
   - Working conditions
   - Direct patient care age population
   - Scope of responsibility and accountability
   - Job-specific responsibilities

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Developing Competency Assessment Program

4. Establish interview skills and prepare for interview:
   – Review job description and identify red flags
   – Ask open-ended questions to establish level of knowledge on key subjects
   – Interpret body language
   – Identify key characteristics that determine whether the applicant lives the facility values and will fit in with teammates

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Developing Competency Assessment Program

5. Perform background checks

- Educational background
- Job-specific qualifications and checks
- Validation of licensure, registration or certification
- Employment verification
- Reference checks

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Research across the health professions has shown that the length of time a professional has been practicing is not a good indicator of competency.

Thus, assessment should be tied to actual practice, not to the assumption of competence based on years of experience – healthcare is a rapidly changing environment.

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Developing Competency Assessment Program

6. Set up an orientation process

- Facility orientation
  - Mission, Vision, and Values
  - Mandatory requirements (QAPI, BBP, Risk Management, IC practices, Safety practices, etc.)
  - Facility tour
  - Benefits, as applicable

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Developing Competency Assessment Program

7. Validate and verify competency

- Self-Evaluation and Skills Checklist - form should be detailed and department-specific

- Selected competencies should be based on the criteria of high-risk, high-frequency, and/or problem-prone procedures, equipment, and common tasks

- Measures not only technical skills but also assesses critical thinking and interpersonal skills

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Describing Competence

- Level 1 = What an individual "knows" measured by his or her general knowledge

- Level 2 = An individual "knows how" to act measured by his or her competence

- Level 3 = An individual "shows how" to act as measured by his or her performance

- Level 4 = What an individual "does" as measured by his or her actions

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Describing Competence

- The significance of these levels lies in the ability of an organization to describe competence only when Level 4 is achieved

- The professional nurse must not only know what to do, how to do something, and demonstrate how it is done but also perform it in practice when no one is looking

- Identify who within the organization bears accountability for each of these levels and tie this responsibility to performance

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Developing Competency Assessment Program

- Design an annual education program
  - To ensure staff possess the skills and abilities required to perform the expectations of their job description and facility policies/procedures
  - To determine gaps in employee performance that need to be closed to ensure safe and competent care
  - To evaluate job performance
  - To provide aggregate data on competency trends as a basis for staff education and practice changes
  - To use competency data in facility QAPI efforts

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Ongoing competency assessment should not just be a repeat of competencies' reviewed on hire and should reflect "the new, changing, high-risk and problematic aspects of the job".

Ensure to include competencies from accreditation and regulatory requirements.

Developing Competency Assessment Program

- Design a cycle for verifying annual competencies
  - Annual: frequency defined by policy
  - Ongoing: new equipment, new procedures, changes in regulations, and changes in the data provide a critical opportunity to assure continuing competence

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Designing a New Competency

- Examine the actual and potential ethical implications

- Ask:
  - What are potential harms that can arise with this new technique?
  - What new skills are needed to achieve competency?
  - Will access to skill development be equal?
  - How will skills be tested?

Timely Performance Reviews

Tying competency validation outcomes to performance evaluation helps ensure the individual accountability needed to perform patient care

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Competency Validation Methodologies

- No single evaluation method or tool can guarantee competence

- There is no evidence for one best method to assess competence

- Each organization defines its processes to ensure staff competence

- Assessment of competence should use more than one indicator

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Education and Training

- In-Services/Webinars

- Competency Fair/Games

- Self Study Modules

- Scavenger Hunts

- Conferences/Association Meetings

- Review Literature/Standards of Practice

Competency Validation Methodologies

- Post-test

- Return demonstration/observation of work

- Peer review

- Self-assessment

- Drills

- Presentation

- QAPI Indicator monitoring

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Competency Validation Methodologies

- Competency assessments must involve more than a checklist and a test

- Nursing competency validation must be effective to ensure safe and quality patient care

Assessing Your Competencies

- Read the Nurse Practice Act for your state of practice

- Study Standards of Practice

- Review American Nurses Association (ANA) Code for Nurses

- For each competency listed, identify how it is measured externally and within the teammate?

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QUESTIONS???

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