Background

- Anxiety is a heightened level of emotion emanating from fear of the unknown
- Nurse graduates encounter high levels of anxiety which is a barrier to learning
- Addressing anxiety deserves attention and intervention so nurse graduates can apply their knowledge skillfully in an environment that is supportive and conducive to learning
- Failure in transitioning to practice competently compromises patient safety and accrues costs.

Goals

- Determine factors that create anxiety for nurse graduates
- Identify and implement strategies to alleviate experienced anxiety
- Create a learning environment that encourages nurse graduates transition to practice

Factors Causing Anxiety

- Lack of clinical knowledge and confidence in nursing skills
- Workload demands
- Forming relationships with peers
- Prioritization and organization related to care delivery
- Interaction with physicians
- Interaction with patient and family

Implementation Process

- Identified factors nurse graduates consider as anxiety provoking
- Created the Performance Anxiety Assessment Tool (modified with permission from the Washington Clinical Experience Assessment Tool)
- Nurse graduate completed the Performance Anxiety Assessment Tool pre and post orientation to compare results
- Anxiety reduction strategies were developed based on theories of cognitive and psychosocial development
- Nurse Graduate completed the Performance Anxiety Strategies Evaluation Form to determine effectiveness of interventions

Theories/Strategies

- Bandura - Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)
- Benner Model of Clinical Competence
- Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory
- Slow Emersion
- Emphasis on Workflow
- Debriefing
- Socialization
- Role Modeling
- Emotional Support
- Healthy Preceptors

Tools

- Anxiety Assessment Tool
- Performance Anxiety Assessment Tool
- Performance Anxiety Strategies Evaluation Form

Results

- Anxiety Reduction Strategies Evaluation
- Anxiety Assessment Tool

Implications for Practice

- Resolving nurse graduate anxiety is important for successful transition to practice
- Using the Anxiety Assessment Tool assists in customizing nurse graduate orientation program, focusing on areas needing assistance and support
- Incorporating cognitive and psychosocial developmental theories provide structure in envisioning an action plan to alleviate performance anxiety