What Are the QSEN Competencies?

Nursing students at Hondros College of Nursing should be aware of acronym “QSEN” and how it relates to their education and the practice of nursing. According to the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) Institute (n.d.), the QSEN competencies help meet the challenge of “preparing future nurses with the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) necessary to continuously improve the quality and safety of the healthcare systems within which they work” (para. 1).

The six major QSEN competencies developed for pre-licensure and graduate nursing programs include patient-centered care, teamwork and collaboration, evidence-based practice (EBP), quality improvement (QI), safety, and informatics (QSEN, n.d.). According to Hunt (2012), “For each competency, there are expectations relating to the knowledge (understanding), skills (implementation), and attitudes (values) that should be achieved” (p. 2). Nursing students should achieve these competencies by the time they graduate and should continue to utilize them as they provide patient care after graduation. They should also look to experienced RNs for guidance throughout their transition into the workforce; this is why it’s so very important for all nurses to understand and incorporate these competencies into everyday patient care.

The QSEN competencies are:

1. **Patient-centered care**—Patients should be included in all decisions and the care provided to them should be based on their needs and values. Nurses need to take the patients’ perspectives, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds into consideration (Hunt, 2012).

2. **Teamwork and collaboration**—Nursing requires interdisciplinary collaboration and shared decision-making based on the perspectives and expertise of all health team members (Hunt 2012).

3. **Evidence-based practice (EBP)**—Nurses need to use their clinical expertise and the best current evidence available along with patient preferences and values to provide the best and safest care possible (QSEN, n.d.).

4. **Quality improvement (QI)**—Nurses need to “use data to monitor the outcomes of care processes and use improvement methods to design and test changes to continuously improve the quality and safety of health care systems” (QSEN, n.d.). When a serious adverse patient outcome or unexpected death occurs, hospitals need to conduct a root cause analysis to find out what happened, why it happened, and how it can be prevented from occurring in the future.

5. **Safety**—Nurses and institutions need to minimize the risk of harm to patients and providers through a culture of safety (Hunt, 2012).

6. **Informatics**—Nurses need to “use information and technology to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error, and support decision making” while promoting safety and quality (QSEN, n.d.).

These competencies should guide nurses in the delivery of safe and effective quality care. Putting them into practice should positively impact patient outcomes, so they need to be a part of a nurse’s everyday practice.

For more information about the QSEN competencies, go to the QSEN website at http://www.qsen.org/.

References
