



Transition

1. UNDERSTANDING TRANSITION FROM STUDENT TO GRADUATE NURSE

Your transition experience will be shaped by the people, places, and systems around you. Supportive team culture, access to learning opportunities, and clear communication can make a big difference. At the same time, pressure, unrealistic expectations, or a mismatch between university learning and workplace practices can increase stress.

The good news is that being aware of these factors helps you prepare. You can reflect on what has helped you thrive during placement and start to think about the kind of environment where you will continue to grow. Every workplace has its own culture, and every graduate brings something valuable to the team.

You may already have strengths in communication, critical thinking, or building rapport. Knowing your strengths and being aware of the challenges others have faced will help you adjust more smoothly.

2. INFLUENCING FACTORS IN GRADUATE TRANSITION

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Key Message:

You bring knowledge, strengths, and values into every shift. By understanding the broader context that shapes your transition, you can advocate for yourself, seek the right supports, and keep building the kind of practice you're proud of.

3. MANAGING ADJUSTMENT: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Every graduate nurse will experience moments of uncertainty during their early weeks and months in practice. What helps most is knowing that this is normal and that there are proven strategies to support the transition. These include mentoring, preceptorship, peer support, structured graduate programs, and feeling welcomed by your team.

Kenny et al. (2021) highlight that successful transition programs often include regular feedback, supportive relationships, and environments where questions are encouraged. These strategies do not remove the pressure, but they help graduates feel capable and supported as they learn.

Your role is not to know everything, but to stay curious, ask for help, and take small steps that build confidence and skill over time. Reflecting on what support you need is an important part of being proactive in your transition.

Key Message:

Support is not a sign of weakness. Knowing what helps you adjust and asking for it early can make your transition smoother, safer, and more rewarding.

4. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE TRANSITIONING

Graduates often bring enthusiasm, fresh thinking, and strong values to their teams. A proactive approach means recognising your strengths, preparing for challenges, and focusing on growth. This includes developing emotional intelligence, seeking feedback, managing stress, and taking responsibility for your wellbeing and development.

Chang (2023) and Chicca and Bindon (2019) emphasise the power of a growth mindset. That means understanding that learning takes time, and confidence is built through repeated practice and reflection. It also means backing yourself when things feel unfamiliar and remembering what you already know. Being proactive is not about doing everything alone. It is about being ready to participate fully, speak up when needed, and reflect with purpose.

This short, engaging video introduces the core principles of growth mindset and why it matters for skill development and confidence building.

<https://youtu.be/75GFzikmRY0>

Below are common thoughts new graduate nurses may have. For each, write a growth mindset reframe that shifts the focus toward learning and development.

Fixed Mindset Thought	Growth Mindset Reframe
"I'm terrible at time management."	"Time management comes with practice and preparation, maybe next time use a shift planner?"
"Everyone else seems to know what they're doing."	"In reality no one is 100% confident in their practice, focus on what you need more learning on and seek these opportunities out"
"I don't want to ask questions and look stupid."	"No question is stupid, it is better to ask too many questions then none at all, clarity brings you confidence and allows safe practice"
"I'll never feel confident in an emergency."	"It takes practice, everyone was once where you are, seek support where/when needed"

Apply It Forward

Based on what you learned from the video and the reframing activity:

- What is one mindset shift or personal habit you want to try during your first month as a graduate nurse? (Not putting too much pressure on myself to be the "perfect nurse" and catch up to nurses who have years of experience over me)
- How might it help you learn or feel more confident when things are unfamiliar? (It will help me avoid shutting down when things get "too complicated" and allow me the reassurance to seek help)

Key message:

You don't need to be perfect, you just need to be open. A growth mindset gives you room to learn, adjust, and thrive. It helps you move from "I'm not good at this" to "I'm learning how to do this."

5. RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

Successful transition is not just about what you know, but also about knowing where to go and who to ask when you need help. Each Local Health District and workplace has resources in place to support graduate nurses. These may

include clinical educators, employee assistance programs, peer groups, wellbeing services, and formal mentoring.

Chang (2023) reminds us that transition is most successful when both internal and external resources are used together. Being resilient, adaptable, and prepared is important, but it works best when paired with a supportive system around you. One of the most empowering things you can do as a graduate nurse is become familiar with the support systems available before you start your role.

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<https://youtu.be/OitaykKBoXc>

Key Message:

Knowing how to access support is a professional strength. You do not have to figure everything out alone. Reaching out early can help you feel prepared, stay safe, and continue developing your confidence.

https://youtu.be/HYbi_c0j0v4