

Debriefing – Identify and Address Gaps in Knowledge and Performance

Things to consider:

- The goal for a debriefing is to guide participants in reflecting on the experience, to identify and address gaps in knowledge and performance and how to improve their practice
- Set ground rules for the debriefing
 - The debriefing is confidential, meaning learners are free to share without risking embarrassment or repercussion
 - Each participant needs to contribute to the discussion
- Stay curious to know more about the decisions or choices that were made
 - Watch: The Posner Report: A Simulation Debriefing Rant by Dr. Glenn Posner
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= depmFciDOM>
 - Believe that the participants are intelligent, well-trained health care professionals trying to do their best and made the choices they made for a good reason that aren't yet understood
 - Do not be judgmental before all sides of the story are known; participants may have done what they did for a very good reason
- Get to the participants' frames of reference or mental models which determined their actions; ask open ended questions to encourage discussion
 - Open ended questions begin or include *what, how or why*
 - Use phrases such as "I am curious why ____?" or "I'm wondering why ____?"
 - Be careful with the phrase "Why did you ____?" as this can lead to defensiveness; as an alternative, consider using a phrase such as "Walk me through why you did what you did" or "Help me understand"
 - Allow time for participants to reflect and add to the discussion; silence is not bad (up to a point)
- Allow the participants to lead the discussion to encourage learning from each other
- Keep the participant discussions focused on the goals and objectives of the simulation experience
- Refrain from turning the debrief into a lecture about the subject; facilitate the participants learning from each other
 - Allow the participants to express what was going through their mind during various parts of the scenario

Debriefing phases and sample questions

- Reaction phase (allow participants to describe how the scenario made them feel)
 - "How did the scenario make you feel?"
- Analysis phase (allow participants to review how the scenario went)
 - "What do you feel went well in the scenario?"
 - "What do you feel were the challenges or barriers to ...?"
 - "Can you tell me what your thoughts were when ...?"
 - "Help me understand ..."
 - "Tell me more about ..."
- Summary phase (what is the take home)
 - "How will you change your practice based on what you learned today?"

See also [Before Beginning a Simulation, it is Essential to Understand Debriefing](#) and [The PEARLS Healthcare Debriefing Tool](#).

References

- Posner, G. (2016, February 25). *The Posner Report: A Simulation Debriefing Rant*. [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_depmFciDOM
- Rudolph, J., Simon, R., Dufresne, R., & Raemer, D. (2006). There's no such thing as "nonjudgmental" debriefing: a theory and method for debriefing with good judgment. *Simulation in Healthcare, 1*(1), 49-55.
- Sawyer, T., Eppich, W., Brett-Fleegler, M., Grant, V., & Cheng, A. (2016). More than one way to debrief: a critical review of healthcare simulation debriefing methods. *Simulation in Healthcare, 11*(3), 209-217.