Safety First! Maintaining Psychological Safety in Simulation Learning Experiences

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Learning Objectives

• 1. Identify the benefits of providing a psychologically safe learning environment.
• 2. Apply the concepts of psychology safety throughout the simulation learning experience
• 3. Develop strategies for managing simulation learner psychological safety

INACLS Standards of Best Practice: Simulation℠ Professional Integrity

Criterion 3: Create and maintain a safe learning environment.
**Definition of Psychological Safety**

**INACSL** - An environment where learners are able to participate without the fear of reprisal or embarrassment.

**SSH** - A feeling (explicit or implicit) within a simulation-based activity that participants are comfortable participating, speaking up, sharing thoughts, and asking for help as needed without concern for retribution or embarrassment.

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**Definition of Psychological Safety**

**Turner & Harder** - A feeling or climate whereby the learner can feel valued and comfortable yet still speak up and take risks without fear of retribution, embarrassment, judgement or consequences either to themselves or others, thereby promoting learning and innovation.

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**Definition of Safe Learning Environment**

**SSH** - A learning environment of mutual respect, support, and respectful communication among leaders and learners; open communication and mutual respect for thought and action encouraged and practiced.
Benefits of Psychological Safety

Benefits to Psychological Safety

Participants will
• actively engage in learning
• engage in self-correcting behaviors
• believe they will not be punished for mistakes
• experience decrease in anxiety in stressful situations
• be able to recall and improve performance
• feel more supported
• avert defensive behaviors and feel empowered by successes
• speak up when errors are made without blaming.
• collaborate with team

Psychological Safety Throughout the Simulation Learning Experience
Attributes of Psychological Safe Learning Environments in Simulation

1. Ability to make mistakes without consequences
2. Qualities of the facilitator
3. Foundational activities
   • Orientation
   • Preparation
   • Objectives
   • Expectations

Turner and Harder (2018)

Planning

• Sets the framework for psychological safety in the simulation learning experience.
• Policy and procedures:
  - Policies to ensure psychological safety of participants
  - Procedures for addressing psychological concerns that occur during the SLE
  - Include awareness of unintended emotional response in participant consent form

Planning

• Facilitator education/training:
  - Components of individual scenarios that may elicit an emotional response
  - Impact of cueing on participant psychological safety
  - Strategies that promote psychological safety
  - Facilitator self-care
• Types/topics of scenarios:
  - Based on needs assessment
  - Identifying purpose of SLE
  - Recognizing emotional level of the participant
Planning

Examples:

• "Unknown and known Code Blue scenarios"

• "In-situ Simulations & Competency validation"

Prebriefing/Preparation

• Helps reduce participant anxiety and stress
  • Orientation to the simulated environment
  • Pre-learning activities related to scenario content
  • Provide objectives
  • Establish fiction contract
  • Reminder about the ability to mistakes
  • Clarify expectations

Prebriefing/Preparation

Examples:

• "UPHDM Simulation Policies and Consents"

• "Simulation Lab tours"
Scenario

- Provides a controlled environment for the learning experience
- Focus on objectives
- Use a script/progression outline
- Facilitate scenario so that participants are “stretched” but not panicked

Scenario

- Be aware of timing and the relationship to cognitive overload, stress, and anxiety
- Observe participants’ body language and facial expressions.
- Listen to participants’ words and tone of voice
- Consider repeating a scenario that did not go well.

Scenario

Examples:

- “Secret Student”
- “Just in time training”
Debriefing

- Ensures focus is on learning
  - Debrief immediately after the scenario
  - Use a theory based debriefing model
  - Allow time to defuse emotions
  - Focus on successes
  - Avoid using video to “show mistakes”
  - Observe participants’ body language and facial expressions.
  - Listen to participants’ words and tone of voice

Debriefing

Examples:

- “Tell me how I can do better!”
- “Fear of speaking up”

Evaluation

- Affects perception of the safe learning environment
  - Focus should be on learning
  - Should not have consequences for making mistakes
  - Opportunity for participants to evaluate psychological safety
Evaluation

Examples:

• “Team Self-Evaluation”

• “Evaluation Tools”

Questions