

Designing Interprofessional Death Notification Simulations: A Framework for Educators

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Purpose

- Address the gap in healthcare education regarding death notification training.
- Highlight interprofessional collaboration in death notification scenarios.
- Equip healthcare professionals with the competence, confidence, and emotional resilience necessary for effective death notification.
- Implement evidence-based death notification practices and simulation techniques to improve learning outcomes.

Background

- Healthcare education programs often do not provide adequate training for delivering death notifications, particularly in an interprofessional context (Campos et al., 2021; Shoenberger et al., 2013).
- The way difficult news is delivered significantly impacts both survivors' bereavement process and healthcare professionals' well-being (De Leo, 2020; Ombres et al., 2017).
- Training should not only enhance competence and confidence in death notifications but also help healthcare professionals manage their emotional responses (Stewart et al., 2000).
- Research has shown that proper training increases confidence in delivering difficult news, leading to better outcomes for all involved (Ahmed et al., 2020; Camargo et al., 2019; Han et al., 2023; Hobgood et al., 2005; Hughes et al., 2021).
- Education must incorporate different modalities and emphasize an interprofessional approach to ensure effective collaboration among team members (Cunningham et al., 2024).



Significance

- Insufficient death notification training can result in healthcare professionals entering practice without the necessary confidence or skills to deliver difficult news effectively (Campos et al., 2021; Shoenberger et al., 2013).
- Many healthcare education programs lack structured opportunities for learners to engage in realistic, interprofessional simulations that emphasize collaborative approaches and emotional resilience (De Leo, 2020; Ombres et al., 2017; Stewart et al., 2000).



Setting/Program Background

- Designed for interprofessional learners, including nurses, physicians, and social workers.
- The simulation occurs in a classroom setting.
- Has been adapted for a virtual learning environment.
- Uses a combination of high-fidelity simulation, standardized patients, and a shadowbox technique (Harder & Turner, 2020).

Methods/Implementation

Simulation Design:

- Uses the GRIEV_ING model to guide death notification training (Hobgood et al., 2005).
- Includes interprofessional collaboration to enhance teamwork and communication (De Leo et al., 2020; Shoenberger et al., 2013).

Shadowbox Technique:

- Enables learners to pause at key decision points, reflect, and analyze expert responses (Harder & Turner, 2020).

Structured Debriefing:

- Encourages reflection on professional and emotional responses (Stewart et al., 2000).

Cognitive Load Theory:

- Breaks down tasks into smaller steps for better processing and learning (Weidman & Baker, 2015).

Evaluation:

- Measured through participant feedback and confidence self-assessments.

Discussion

- Training improves the ability to handle emotionally charged situations and enhances communication (Ahmed et al., 2020; Han et al., 2023).
- Incorporating simulation-based learning addresses existing gaps in traditional education (Campos et al., 2021).
- Structured debriefing and reflection process is crucial in helping healthcare professionals manage the emotional burden associated with delivering bad news.

Implications

- Improving death notification training may lead to better patient and family experiences (De Leo et al., 2020).
- Enhancing simulation-based education can improve confidence and competence in delivering death notifications (Camargo et al., 2019).
- Interprofessional training fosters teamwork and collaborative problem-solving (Cunningham et al., 2024).
- Implementing Cognitive Load Theory principles optimizes learning efficiency (Weidman & Baker, 2015).



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