Enhancing Communication & Care: The Importance of Interprofessional Training

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Background

Interprofessional collaboration is essential for effective patient care, yet healthcare students often receive limited formal education in engaging with other professions. Developing the interprofessional simulation by an interprofessional team provided a safe and immersive learning environment where students could develop role awareness and mutual respect, strengthen communication skills and engage in collaborative patient-centered decision making.

Introduction/Methods

A needs assessment revealed an opportunity to enhance team-based learning through hands-on simulation for entry-level students across multiple health disciplines. An interprofessional faculty team developed unfolding simulation scenarios aligned with INACSL's Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice, emphasizing teamwork and collaborative care. Educators from nursing, paramedicine, PA, pharmacy, PT, OT, and medicine were trained to lead the simulation experience. Debriefing, conducted using the PEARLS framework in rapid-cycle format, included IPEC-aligned questions focused on interprofessional communication, values, and ethics, co-facilitated by faculty from diverse healthcare professions to foster authentic, team-based reflection.





INACSL Best Practice

To ensure a high-quality interprofessional simulation experience, faculty development was grounded in the INACSL Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best PracticeTM for Debriefing. A scripted debriefing guide was co-developed during the scenario design process and incorporated into interactive training sessions. These sessions emphasized psychologically safe learning environments and consistent facilitation strategies rooted in evidence-based simulation pedagogy.

Facilitators were required to attend at least one training and were introduced to the PEARLS framework to support structured reflection aligned with IPEC competencies, including role clarity, communication, and team-based decision-making. Interprofessional debriefing teams, comprised of faculty from different health disciplines, ensured balanced, team-focused discussions and helped prevent discipline-specific feedback. This approach provided scaffolding for novice facilitators while allowing experienced faculty to adapt and expand on learner-driven reflection.

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Qualitative Data

Faculty developed the simulation around key interprofessional learning outcomes to promote teamwork, communication, and role recognition. Following the event, student feedback was collected through post-simulation surveys and thematically analyzed by three independent reviewers. Findings demonstrated that the objectives were effectively met, with students showing growth in the following areas:

- **Understanding Roles & Responsibilities** Recognized the unique contributions of each team member.
- **Respect & Collaboration** Worked together to develop patient-centered care plans.
- **Recognizing Limitations** Reflected on personal strengths and areas for growth.
- **Effective Communication** Applied structured tools in patient and team interactions.

Key Themes Identified:

- Improved appreciation for **interprofessional collaboration**
- Enhanced **professional**, **respectful communication**
- Greater understanding of holistic patient care
- Clearer insight into **team roles and dynamics**
- Recognition of communication as **critical to patient outcomes**

Benefits/Impacts

The simulation fostered a collaborative learning environment that reflected real-world healthcare. Students gained a deeper appreciation for the roles of other disciplines and strengthened skills in communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making.

Structured debriefing allowed for meaningful reflection, improving students' readiness for future interprofessional practice. Faculty benefited from cross-disciplinary teaching, enhanced simulation and debriefing techniques, and increased opportunities to mentor outside their own discipline.

This experience highlights the value of experiential learning in preparing students for team-based care and navigating the complexities of the healthcare system.



