Training Simulations: Principles for Effective Learning

Using well-planned and executed simulations as a training model provides opportunity to improve the overall effectiveness and safety of your organization. Simulations allow staff to practice learned skills and tools, improve decision-making, and receive feedback and assessment in areas including reaction time, limitations and boundaries – without dangerous implications. Using the following four components will maximize the outcomes of using simulations in your organization.

4 Components of Running Training Simulations

1. Framing Simulation Outcomes

- Clarify purpose and use of simulations as part of training
- Provide the flow for prepping roles, running the simulation and debrief
- Set clear ground rules and expectations for trainees
- Introduce the setting; keep as realistic as possible
- Introduce Simulation Planning and Observation Form
    - *Note: Frame simulations only once unless new trainees enter the simulations or questions arise.*

2. Prepping Simulation Participants
- Identify the roles: trainer, simulation/program participants, and simulation responders
- Identify clear topic/topics (to the simulation participants; with overview to the responders)
- Set the appropriate amount of time to brief, run the simulation and debrief the experience
- Define and assign participant roles (provide specific detail on what each role means, what roles do/don't do; active or inactive role, when a role should "respond" to a trainer's request)
- Revisit ground rules/expectations

3. Running the Simulation
- Trainer stays in trainer role
- Clear start and stop for the simulation
- Identify practices and responses for managing physical and emotional safety
- Hold participants accountable for maintaining stated roles and expectations; re-establish accountability as necessary (firmness on roles is required)

4. Debriefing the Experience
- Provide a break between the simulation and the debrief time
- Provide appropriate time for the debrief
- Revisit goals/purpose of the simulation training and safe learning environment (to succeed, fail, give feedback, and learn)
- Focus on:
    - What was observed?
    - What actions were taken?
    - What impact did it have on the situation? +/- (de-escalate or escalate)
    - What are the takeaways? Learnings. Needs. Positives and changes to make.
    - What feelings and emotions were evoked as decisions were made and the simulation played out

Training Simulations
Trainer Considerations

- o Take full responsibility for providing firm direction, holding staff accountable, maintaining the physical and emotional safety of all trainees and holding high standards for learning.
- o Be prepared to maintain the trainer role throughout the simulation and debrief.
- o Frame outcomes, including an emphasis on this being "a" way, not "the" way, nor is it pass/fail.
- o Create a clear start and end to simulations; identify the phrases "begin simulation" and "hard stop" or use a prop/action, such as a bandanna wave, to signal when the simulation starts and ends.
- o Make it clear to all participants that they may stop a simulation if it is physically or emotionally unsafe.
- o Have a clear endpoint in mind, while still being intentional (and flexible) about the "end result".
- o Give direct, complete, and specific instructions to trainees playing the roles of "student/program participant" and "instructors" to prevent all trainees from creating what they think should happen.
- o Frame trainee roles with great intention – this may be challenging; consider how comfortable you are with explaining the roles to trainees. Be sure primary AND secondary and bystander roles are clear.
- o Manage "compliant" participants; prevent acting out or getting caught up in the moment by setting clear role expectations; consider proximity, one-on-one conversations, and provide written role expectations if needed.
- o Use simulations for a variety of training topics and set expectations/observations based on your organizational policies, procedures, practices and culture.
- o Brief trainees (responding trainee and simulation participant trainees in student/patient roles) separately to prevent overhearing direction ("cheating"), or participant trainee from making it harder for the responding trainee.
- o Demonstrate mindfulness of the depiction of behaviors and symptoms of "students", "patients", and all participants to trainees; do not use negative language or characterization or overstate behaviors when describing program participants. Use objective behavior descriptions.
- o Create opportunities for all trainees to be in the roles of "instructor" and "student/patient".
- o Use realistic venue for simulations when possible; if not, be intentional about setting the scene.
- o Be clear about the skills the trainer expects trainees to work on; be clear about what the trainer is observing within the larger simulation.
- o Use a progression and ensure the appropriate level of challenge - teach a skill and provide opportunity to practice the skill with a partner or small group prior to engaging in larger group simulations.
- o Do not "test" your trainees on skills they have not yet been taught.
- o Do not push trainees to their red/panic zone where effective learning fails; avoid "shut down."
- o Do not use unrealistic, dramatic, or unnecessarily complicated simulations.
- o Create a framework for feedback; simulations are conducted primarily for the purpose of sparking debrief discussion, learning, and improvement. Provide adequate time for debriefing.

<u>Simulation Limitations</u>: Inappropriate use of this method can result in insufficient skill acquisition and can produce an emotionally and/or physically unsafe environment. Use this method to check for understanding and to assess skill mastery with trainees who have the knowledge to respond to a dynamic scenario. Emotional and physical safety could be at risk if trainees are not clear about the purpose of a simulation and/or bought into the roles and expectations.

Simulation Planning and Observation Form

This form is a tool for use by simulation trainers during the planning period, observation and debrief of the simulation. The tool's purpose is to identify specific behaviors/symptoms presented by the program participant (the focus of the simulation) and the acceptable and appropriate action(s) and response(s) the trainer expects to observe by the responding trainee throughout the simulation. More experienced trainees may engage in higher-level responses.

Participant Behavior/Symptom	Acceptable/Appropriate Response(s) of Trainees
1. Cold, wet, mildly hypothermic participant	☐ Alertness to situation ☐ Change out of wet clothes ☐ Engage in active movement ☐ Add warm layers ☐ Provide hot drinks ☐ Provide food; caloric intake ☐ Observe/close monitoring ☐ Other:
2. Homesick, withdrawn participant	☐ Alertness to situation ☐ Hold one-on-one conversation ☐ Ask open-ended questions; listen well ☐ Validate feelings and what is shared ☐ Talk about personal or course goals ☐ Connect homesick participant to a peer ☐ Provide participant with a specific role in group ☐ Solution-oriented conversation ☐ Observe/check-in ☐ Other:
3. Participant in respiratory distress (Hx/Asthma)	☐ Alertness to situation ☐ Instruct/assist participant in using emergency metered dose inhaler (albuterol) ☐ Help participant into a position of comfort ☐ Provide calm reassurance ☐ Attempt controlled breathing exercises w/ participant ☐ Attempt to create a spacer for inhaler user ☐ Calmly direct other participants away from the scene ☐ Begin to create a plan for evacuation and/or a plan for administration of epinephrine ☐ Other:
4. Multi-participant verbal conflict	☐ Alertness to situation ☐ Quickly and directly address and deescalate participants ☐ Separate involved participants ☐ Redirect compliant/uninvolved participants ☐ Implement conflict resolution tool(s) ☐ Create short/long-term plan with involved participants ☐ Address and re-tone set full participant group ☐ Other:

2019 – WRMC Participant Simulation Planning Tool Handout (K.Nelson)

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Participant Behavior/Symptom	Acceptable/Appropriate Response(s) of Trainees
1.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
2.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
3.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
4.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐