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Keeping Students Engaged During Simulated Clinical Experiences

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KEYWORDS

simulation; simulated clinical day; student engagement; NCSBN Simulation study; active learning; mental health simulations; debriefing **Abstract:** Our NCSBN study team designed the simulated experience with a variety of topics and techniques to enhance student engagement. Structuring the simulation day to be physically, emotionally, and intellectually stimulating is a foundation for engagement.

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Our National Council of State Boards National (NCSBN) Simulation study team felt that student engagement was a critical priority from the beginning, so we designed the simulated experience with that in mind. As the study progressed, we were sensitive to the student's level of engagement and adapted our approach as necessary. In this column, we will discuss ways we kept the student engaged: using a variety of topics and pacing, avoiding monotony, overcoming resistance to active learning, and using flexible debriefing techniques.

Variety of Topics and Pacing

Providing a variety of simulation scenarios and skill stations during each simulated clinical experience was a

cornerstone to student engagement. For example, the mental health 8-week course had 48 clinical hours, which translated to 24 simulated clinical hours for the 50% study group and to 12 simulated clinical hours for the 25% study group (see Figure 1 for the simulation and skill station topics used in the mental health course). Per the schedule, the 25% study group was kept active during their 12 hours of simulated clinical by participating in six simulation scenarios involving a variety of psychiatric and/or mental health topics and six skill stations. Within each simulated clinical experience, the students were kept active by changing activities every hour (see Figure 2 for a daily schedule).

Avoiding Monotony

We began to sense that engagement was decreasing by the second year of the study. The study team discussed methods

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Date	Clinical Group	Simulation	Skills Stations
Monday 3/12/12	Beth 25%	Emerson Vasos Axis I Bipolar I with Psychotic	MSE/1:1
		Features	Communication Activity
		Element Consider Transconner	Take Down/De-escalation
		Florence Smith: Temazepam overdose	
		Mishael Circum P	
		Michael Simms; Depression with suicide attempt	
Wednesday 3/14/12	Lori 50%	Emerson Vasos Axis I	MSE/1:1
Thursday 3/15/12	Sue 50%	Bipolar I with Psychotic Features	Communication Activity
Friday 3/16/12	Beth 50%		Take Down/De-escalation
		Florence Smith: Temazepam overdose	
		Helene Bender Acute Gastritis, Substance abuse	
		Michael Simms; Depression with suicide attempt	
Wednesday 3/21/12	Lori 50%	Rae Kramer: Intimate partner	Hearing Voices
Thursday 3/22/12	Sue 50%	violence	Critical Thinking/Layered Learning Cards Safety Plan Development/Domestic Viol.
		Sarah Stewart: Suicidal	Sarcty Fiant Developmenty Domestic VIOI.
		Ideation	
		Margarita Castillo #2: Post-	
		partum depression, intimate partner violence	
		Jose Rodriguez: Depression,	
		C7 Spinal Cord Injury,	
Wednesday 3/28/12	Lori 50%	Suicidal Ideation Ellie Raymond: Depression,	Progressive Med Pass
Thursday 3/29/12	Sue 50%	S/P Suicide attempt, Type I	Eating Disorders (VCE)
, , ,		Diabetes	Cognitive Disorders VCE
		Carlos Garcia: Paranoid	
		Schizophrenia	
		Cynthia Perkins: Bipolar	
		Disorder I/Mania	
		Andrea Leonard:	
		Schizoaffective Disorder	
Wednesday 4/4/12	Lori 25%	Emerson Vasos Axis I Bipolar I with Psychotic	MSE/1:1
Thursday 4/5/12	Sue 25%	Features	Communication Activity
		Florence Smith: Temazepam	Take Down/De-escalation
		overdose overdose	
		Michael Simms; Depression	
		with suicide attempt	
Friday 4/6/12	Roth 50%	(50% only)Euro	Progressive Med Pass
Friday 4/6/12 Thursday 4/12/12	Beth 50% Sue 25%	(50% only) <u>Ellie Raymond</u> : Depression, S/P Suicide	Eating Disorders (VCE)
Monday 4/16/12	Beth 25%	attempt, Type I Diabetes	Cognitive Disorders VCE
Wednesday 4/18/12	Lori 25%	Carlos Garcia: Paranoid	
		Schizophrenia	
		Cynthia Perkins: Bipolar	
		Disorder I/Mania	
		Andrea Leonard:	
Friday 4/20/12	Roth FOW	Schizoaffective Disorder Rae Kramer: Intimate partner	Hearing Voices
Friday 4/20/12	Beth 50%	violence	Hearing Voices Critical Thinking/Layered Learning Cards
		Sarah Stewart: Suicidal	Safety Plan Development/Domestic Viol.
		Ideation	
		Margarita Castillo #2: Post-	
		partum depression, intimate	
		partner violence	
		Jose Rodriguez: Depression, C7 Spinal Cord Injury,	
		Suicidal Ideation	

Figure 1 Mental health simulation and skill station topics. MSE=Mental status exam; VCE=Virtual clinical excursions.

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