



ELSEVIER

Standards of Best Practice: Simulation

INACSL Standards of Best Practice: SimulationSM Debriefing

INACSL Standards Committee

KEYWORDS

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As the science of simulation continues to evolve, so does the need for additions and revisions to the INACSL Standards of Best Practice: SimulationSM. Therefore, the INACSL Standards of Best Practice: Simulation are [living documents](#).

Standard

All simulation-based experiences include a planned debriefing session aimed at improving future performance.

Background

Learning is dependent on the integration of experience and reflection. The evidence is clear that essential learning occurs in the debriefing phase of the simulation-based experience.¹⁻⁵ Reflection is the conscious consideration of the meaning and implication of an action, which includes the assimilation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes with pre-existing knowledge.⁶⁻⁸ Reflection can lead to new interpretations by the participants; cognitive reframing is essential to learning.^{8,9} The skills of the debriefer are important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes.¹⁰⁻¹⁶

Integration of the debriefing process into simulation-based experiences enhances learning and heightens participant self-awareness and self-efficacy. Debriefing promotes understanding and supports transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes with a focus on best practices to promote safe, quality patient care, and development of the participant's professional role.¹⁷⁻¹⁸

Potential consequences of not following this standard can lead to unsuccessful debriefing sessions (e.g., deficiency in attainment of learning outcomes or behavior change) and creating a potentially uncomfortable experience for the participant.¹⁸⁻²⁰

Criteria Necessary to Meet This Standard

1. The debrief is facilitated by a person(s) competent in the process of debriefing.

2. The debrief is conducted in an environment that is conducive to learning and supports confidentiality, trust, open communication, self-analysis, feedback, and reflection.
3. The debrief is facilitated by a person(s) who can devote enough concentrated attention during the simulation to effectively debrief the simulation-based experience.
4. The debrief is based on a theoretical framework for debriefing that is structured in a purposeful way.
5. The debrief is congruent with the objectives and outcomes of the simulation-based experience.

Criterion 1: The debrief is facilitated by a person(s) competent in the process of debriefing.

Required elements:

- Implement best practices in debriefing with regard to structuring the format of the debriefing and facilitating reflective discussion.
- Acquire specific initial education through a formal course, a continuing education offering, and/or targeted work with an experienced mentor (see INACSL Standard: Facilitation).
- Seek feedback from both participants and experienced debriefers.
- Actively maintain debriefing skills through active engagement in simulation-based experiences.
- Validate continuing competence as a debriefer through the ongoing use of an established instrument.
- Participate in ongoing education provided by formal courses, continuing education offerings, and/or targeted work with an experienced mentor (see INACSL Standard: Facilitation).

Criterion 2: The debrief is conducted in an environment that is conducive to learning and supports confidentiality, trust, open communication, self-analysis, feedback, and reflection.

Required elements:

- Orient the participants to the overall debriefing process.
- Establish expectations regarding confidentiality of participants' performance, the content of the simulation scenario, and the content of the debriefing discussion.
- Collaborate with participants to develop rules (code) of conduct concerning constructive, honest, and respectful feedback.
- Acknowledge and validate the participants' emotional response to the simulation-based experience and their primary concerns before engaging in reflection on and analysis of actions.
- Demonstrate positive regard for participants by exploring their unique perspectives.
- Guide participants' reflection on personal and contextual factors that impacted decision-making such as past

experience, culture, background, personality, skills, and knowledge.

- Use verbal and nonverbal supportive demeanor to encourage discussion.
- Engage both observers and participants in debriefing to support collaborative learning.
- Manage unexpected participant responses.
- Apply principles of group facilitation to ensure the balanced participation of all participants in the discussion.
- Adjust the level of facilitation to that which is required by the group.
- Conduct the debriefing in a conference room or special debrief room separate from where the simulation occurred when possible or as appropriate.
- Facilitate the debriefing immediately after the live simulation session.^{3,5}
- Follow INACSL Standard: Professional Integrity and INACSL Standard: Facilitation

Criterion 3: The debrief is facilitated by a person(s) who can devote enough concentrated attention during the simulation to effectively debrief the simulation-based experience.

Required elements:

- Concentrated attention is achieved when the debriefer is not distracted by having to perform multiple functions and roles during the scenario (e.g., playing the voice of the patient, controlling the scenario, queuing the learning and evaluating the activities all at the same time and is able to focus on the most important role(s).
- Establish a climate of professional respect, including a requirement for confidentiality related to the content of the debriefing discussions (see INACSL Standard: Professional Integrity).
- Ensure adequate support to operate technology is available to allow the debriefer to focus primarily on learner evaluation (formative or summative).
- Plan for postdebriefing activities that promote self-reflection and critique.
- Outline the process for debriefing, including the expectation that the participants will drive the discussion as they critically analyze their own performance and provide input into other's performance.
- Choose the appropriate feedback technique, which may include face-to-face, numeric, graphical transcripts of performance from equipment, video conferencing or video replay, checklists, scores, and other forms of feedback.
- Facilitate participants' engagement in the reflective process.
- Provide concrete examples of participant performance.

- Adjust the level of facilitation during the debrief needed to engage every participant in discussion as appropriate for his/her role.
- Provide formative feedback based on scenario objectives, participants' decisions and actions, including reinforcing positive behaviors, correcting misunderstandings, and clarifying cognitive frames that led to incorrect decisions.
- Assist participants in conceptualizing how the learning constructed during the simulation and debriefing can be applied to future clinical situations.
- Include discussion of unexpected topics as needed.
- Facilitate reflection on individual and team performance to achieve targeted performance improvement.
- Facilitate appropriate critical thinking, clinical judgment, reasoning, reflection, and reflective thinking.
- Allow facilitation to be modified based on assessed participant needs and the impact of the experience.
- Summarize learning at the end of the debriefing process to close the gaps in knowledge and reasoning.

Criterion 4: The debrief is based on a theoretical framework for debriefing that is structured in a purposeful way.

Required elements:

- The facilitator uses a debriefing framework and considers the following elements when selecting:
 - Objectives and expected outcomes.
 - Complexity of scenario.
 - Needs of participants.
 - Includes the minimum phases of reaction, analysis, and summary.
 - Level of competence of faculty with the debriefing framework.
 - Simulation scenario/experience.
- Current frameworks available are GAS²¹ (gather, analyze, summarize), Debriefing with Good Judgment,⁶ PEARLS,²² Debriefing for Meaningful Learning²³ (DML), Plus-Delta, 3D Model of Debriefing,²⁴ and the OPT Model of Clinical Reasoning.²⁵ Frameworks will continue to be developed that are appropriate to be used during debriefing.

Criterion 5: The debrief is congruent with the objectives and outcomes of the simulation-based experience.

Required elements:

- Consider the objectives in the debriefing session.
- Consider the outcomes of the simulation experience and adjust debriefing to include learner-centered objectives.²⁶
- During the debriefing session, identify performance gaps based on the expected outcomes of the simulation-based experience.

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Subsequent INACSL Standards

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