

Module:

Briefing and Debriefing Techniques for Virtual Simulations

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Learning Objectives

1. Identify considerations for using web conferencing for a brief or debrief.
2. Work through a step-by-step process for conducting a facilitated virtual synchronous debrief.

Introduction

There are common elements for a facilitator to address, whenever a web-conferencing system like Zoom is used for a brief or debrief. When using technology, the aim is for the user to have as ‘glitch free’ experience as possible and to create an effective learning environment. So, when using a web conferencing system, take some of the following steps to ensure effective use of technology.

The following table has some suggestions when using a web conferencing system for the first time (Table 1).

Table 1. Strategies for Managing a Web Conferencing Experience

Strategy	Rationale
Provide the link and password in multiple ways i.e. email, learning management system	Easy access to the information required to get into a web conferencing system increases learner participation.
Recommend high speed internet	The web conferencing system runs smoother when users have high speed internet.
Advise learners about the audio and video capabilities.	When learners sign in, it is important for them to set up audio and video components.



Instruct learners on the use of the chat	If the chat function is set it up in such a way that it can be monitored. If it cannot be monitored then disable this function.
Program the chat to send messages to everyone; disable private messages.	The group discussion is enhanced when the group sees what is being said instead of when there are private conversations.
Encourage learners to turn off their microphone when they are listening to others.	Avoiding extraneous noises decreases distractions and supports the learners focus being on what is being said.
Encourage learners to leave their video on but do not make it mandatory.	When the videos are on, the facilitator and respond to non verbal communication but making it mandatory can affect the learner's psychological safety.

Facilitated Virtual Synchronous Debrief

A facilitated virtual synchronous debrief is a group debrief conducted virtually using a web conferencing medium, where the discussion, facilitated by an educator/simulationist occurs at a set time. It can be used following a synchronous virtual simulation enactment over a web conferencing system or at a later time following an asynchronous virtual simulation. A facilitated virtual synchronous debrief offers scheduling flexibility for both the learners and the facilitator. But, scheduling can also be a challenge due to varied participant schedules making finding a common meeting time difficult. A major advantage of this type of debrief is the opportunity to hear peers' and educator's perspective on the virtual simulation.

The facilitated discussion questions are crafted by the facilitator and based on a debriefing theoretical framework. Debriefing questions are created to meet the level of the learner and to help them achieve the learning objectives. When a facilitated virtual synchronous debrief follows an asynchronous virtual simulation, it should take place within 2 weeks of learners completing the simulation and last about 50 minutes. Effective facilitator skills and clear instructions about how the learner is expected to participate in the debrief are key to facilitating an effective debrief.

The facilitated virtual synchronous debrief follows the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™(see [https://www.nursingsimulation.org/article/S1876-1399\(21\)00098-0/fulltext](https://www.nursingsimulation.org/article/S1876-1399(21)00098-0/fulltext)) with some nuances related to using the virtual environment. When facilitating this type of debrief, there are a number of essential elements to include. A step-by-step outline of the process, with the rationale for each step is provided in a table form below for you to use as a guide.

Table 2: Facilitated virtual synchronous debrief: a process

Process	Rationale
1.Ensure that the debrief is led by an experienced debriefing facilitator.	Debriefing is a learned skill.



2. Determine who will lead the debrief when co-debriefing is taking place	Supports organization and flow.
3. Ensure the facilitator has an intimate understanding of the virtual simulation.	Supports content expertise and an understanding of the learner perspective.
4. Open the web-conferencing system well in advance of the session: set up your camera to ensure clear picture and adequate lighting; ensure audio is working.	Supports organization and social presence Promotes student satisfaction when the experience is 'glitch free'.
5. Welcome all learners when they arrive.	Promotes social presence and a sense of inclusion.
6. Provide technology guidelines: advise students if the session will be recorded; appropriate use of video, microphone, chat, quiet space.	Enhances psychological safety Promotes student satisfaction when the experience is 'glitch free'
7. Establish ground rules: Confidentiality statement; use of hand raising to minimize interruptions. Let learners know you will be calling on each of them briefly to share initial reactions to the simulation so they will be prepared.	Enhances psychological safety.
8. Review Flow: Describe what will happen in the debrief (i.e. initial reactions, what went well, what did not go as well, take home messages, final thoughts).	Enhances psychological safety.
9. Re-introduce the patient and the simulation learning objectives; with virtual simulation learner time elapsed since playing the simulation will vary. This gets everyone back on the 'same page' to start.	Supports organization.
10. Ask learners to access and review analytics or summary report of their virtual simulation experience during debrief (if used)	Encourages reflection and analytical skills.
11. Ask the group questions but also post each question in the chat box so that learners can reread the question at any time.	Supports inclusion and organization.
12. Start with initial reactions (in a few words, how did that simulation feel?). **	Encourages reflection.
13. Start the discussion by asking learners to describe what went well in the scenario? (what did they feel comfortable with, what exactly would they do the next time?). **	Encourages reflection and analytical skills.
14. Discuss 'what didn't go so well' in the scenario and/or 'what would you change for next time?'"**	Encourages reflection and analytical skills.
15. Discuss- at 'what point did you feel something was wrong? What did you do?'"**	Encourages reflection and analytical skills.
17. Review key take- away messages/key points (suggest white board or PowerPoint slides to promote discussion).	Supports application to practice.
18. Invite final thoughts and one key take- home message that learners will use in their practice. Invite each learner to comment.	Supports inclusion and practice application.
19. In closing, thank everyone for participating.	Supports social presence.
20. Offer to be available for further discussion or questions	Supports learning, inclusion.



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21. Evaluate the learner and the faculty experience.	Encourages faculty development.
22. Refine strategy for next time.	Encourages faculty development.

** These items may vary depending on the debriefing framework you are using.

The table above has been copied from the article Goldsworthy, S. & Verkuyl, M. (2021). Facilitated Virtual Synchronous Debriefing: A practical approach. Clinical Simulation in Nursing,

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecns.2021.06.002>

Recommended Reading

Goldsworthy, S. & Verkuyl, M. (2021). Facilitated Virtual Synchronous Debriefing: A practical approach. Clinical Simulation in Nursing, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecns.2021.06.002>

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