

PEARLS Debriefing Script: (Promoting Excellence And Reflective Learning In Simulation)

Setting the scene:

“We will spend about XX minutes debriefing the simulation. Our goal is to improve how we work together and care for our patients. Everyone here is intelligent and wants to improve. First, I’ll be interested to hear how you are feeling now that the simulation is over. Second, I’d like someone to describe what the simulation was about to make sure we are all on the same page. Then, we’ll explore the aspects of the simulation that worked well for you and those you would handle differently and why. I’ll be keen to hear what was going through your mind at various point in time. We’ll end by summarizing some take-home points and how to apply them in your clinical practice.”

Reaction:

- Any initial reactions?
- How are you feeling?
- Follow up with: Other reactions? How are the rest of you feeling?

Description:

- Can someone please share a short summary of the case?
- From your perspective, what were the main issues that came up?
- Possible follow up questions: What happened next? What things did you do for the patient?

Analysis:

Signal the transition to the analysis of the simulation and frame the discussion:

- Now that we are clear about what happened, let’s talk more about that situation. I think there were aspects you managed effectively and others that seemed more challenging. I would like to explore each of these with you.

Select the analysis style that is best suited for the time allowed, student experience and desired outcomes. Discussion should link back to the simulation objectives:

Learner Self-Assessment (+/ Δ)	Provide information (Directive Feedback & Teaching)	Focused Facilitation (Advocacy-Inquiry)
-What aspects do you think you handled well and why? What aspects would you want to change and why?	I noticed you [behaviour]. Next time you may want to [suggested behaviour] because [rationale]	Specifically state what you would like to talk about I would like to spend a few minutes talking about X because [rationale]
Close performance gaps selectively using directive feedback and teaching or focused facilitation	Provide relevant knowledge or tips to perform the action correctly	I noticed [observation] and I thought/wondered [your perspective]. What were your thoughts at that time?

- Are there any outstanding issues before we start to close?

Application/Summary:

- Learner guided: I like to close the debriefing by having each of you state one or two take-aways that will help you in the future
- Educator guided: in summary, the key learning points from this simulation were...

The following debrief script is modified from:

Eppich, Walter MD, MEd; Cheng, Adam MD, FRCPC, FAAP. Promoting Excellence and Reflective Learning in Simulation (PEARLS): Development and Rationale for a Blended Approach to Health Care Simulation Debriefing. *Simulation in Healthcare: The Journal of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare* 10(2):p 106-115, April 2015. | DOI: 10.1097/SIH.0000000000000072

Retrieved from: [Promoting Excellence and Reflective Learning in Simulation \(... : Simulation in Healthcare \(lww.com\)\)](#)

The script uses the PEARLS framework to guide the debrief and provides suggested phrases and questions to help facilitate the discussion in a systematic manner

Why use a framework and debriefing script?

- Learning outcomes are improved when novice educators use debriefing scripts
- Consistent use of a debriefing framework helps to structure the debrief
- Learners anticipate the flow and nature of the conversation once they become familiar with the framework
- Helps organize the debriefing process and promotes confidence in the facilitator
- Better time management and prioritization of discussion points

(Cheng, Eppich, Sawyer & Grant, 2017)

Resources to learn more about debriefing:

Bajaj, K., Meguerdichian, M., Thoma, B. Huan, S., Eppich, W. & Cheng, A. (2018). The PEARLS healthcare debriefing tool. *Academic Medicine*, 93(2), 336.

Cheng, A., Eppich, W., Sawyer, T. & Grant, V. (2017). Debriefing: The state of the art and sciences in healthcare simulation. In Nestel, D. Jolly, B., Kelly, M. & Watson, M. (Eds.). *Healthcare simulation education: Evidence, theory and practice* (pp. 158-164). Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell

Cheng, A. Grant, B., Robinson, T., Catena, H., Lachapelle, K., Kim, J...Eppich, W. (2016). The promoting excellence and reflective learning in simulation (PEARLS) approach to health care debriefing: A faculty development guide. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, 12(10), 419-428

Eppich, W., & Cheng, A. (2015). Promoting excellence and reflective learning in simulation (PEARLS): Development and rationale for a blended approach to health care simulation debriefing. Retrieved from: [Promoting Excellence and Reflective Learning in Simulation \(... : Simulation in Healthcare \(lww.com\)\)](#)

Levett-Jones, T. & Lapkin, S. (2014). A systematic review of the effectiveness of simulation debriefing in health professional education. *Nurse Education Today*, 34(6), e58-63

INACSL Standards Committee (2021). INACSL standards of best practice. *International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning*, Retrieved from: [Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ \(inacsl.org\)](#)

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