# More Than One Way to Debrief

## A Critical Review of Healthcare Simulation Debriefing Methods

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Summary Statement:Debriefing is a critical component in the process of learning through healthcare simulation. This critical review examines the timing, facilitation, conversational structures, and process elements used in healthcare simulation debriefing. Debriefing occurs either after (postevent) or during (within-event) the simulation. The debriefing conversation can be guided by either a facilitator (facilitator-guided) or the simulation participants themselves (self-guided). Postevent facilitator-guided debriefing may incorporate several conversational structures. These conversational structures break the debriefing discussion into a series of 3 or more phases to help organize the debriefing and ensure the conversation proceeds in an orderly manner. Debriefing process elements are an array of techniques to optimize reflective experience and maximize the impact of debriefing. These are divided here into the following 3 cate-

Google Scholar were searched using the search terms ÔÔde-brief*ÕÕ and ÔÔsimul*.ÕÕ The literature search was conducted between June 2014 and October 2015, with a Þnal search dates of October 14, 2015. The literature search was iterative, with repeated searches of the literature to examine speciÞc topic areas. Hand searches of bibliographies and the exam-

optimizing learning through simulation.[13] Ensuring that the learning objectives are covered in the debriefing can be facilitated by including them in the simulation scenario template.[50,51] Providing a phase in the debriefing to analyze learning objectives is included in all of the postevent debriefing conversational structures.[26,33-38] Although it is important to address all the learning objectives during the debriefing, these learning objectives do not necessarily need to be revealed to the scenario participants in details.[49]

### Asking Open-Ended Questions

Asking open-ended questions helps facilitate discussion and is designed to foster reflection and self-assessment on the part of the simulation participants.[26,33-38] Examples of

the use of video review are adjuncts that facilitators can employ to attempt to enhance the debriefing experience. Ensuring psychological safety, establishing a shared mental model, addressing key learning objectives, using open questions, and silence are mandatory components of any debriefing.

This report has several limitations. The review followed a nonsystematic critical synthesis approach. Thus, it is prone to all the risks, and benefits, of a nonsystematic review.[27,34] Though not ''systematic,'' the authors sought to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review of the pertinent literature. In addition, the authors themselves have significant experience with debriefing research, providing them with content expertise, which they leveraged during the review. Another potential limitation is the lack of clear definition of some terms used (eg, ''feedback,'' ''process elements,'' etc.); thus, some terminology utilized here may not match the definitions used by some simulation educators. In this review, we attempted to assimilate the literature to clarify how debriefing is structured, organized, and conducted in an effort to advance the field. We believe that the topic areas of

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