

Attitudes

In simulation we ask that all participants enter the learning environment under the basic assumption that everyone is intelligent, well-trained, caring, wants to do their best, and improve. An easy way to think about the basic assumption is to think about your most trusted colleague at work. Whenever they are doing something, how do you regard their actions? If they make what's perceived as a mistake, what's your first instinct about what they've done? Try to apply the same perspective to all learners in the simulation setting.

Having the basic assumption mindset means being curious. When someone behaves differently from what's expected, don't assume knowledge of why it's happened. As it's been said, "Mistakes or puzzles to be solved not crimes to be punished."

People don't make mistakes on purpose. Get curious and inquire about the why behind observable actions. Commit to understanding others' perspectives and have respect for various opinions. One of the most important concepts in simulation is Psychological Safety.

Psychological Safety: A feeling (explicit or implicit) within a simulation-based activity that participants are comfortable participating, speaking up, sharing thoughts, and asking for help as needed without concern for retribution or embarrassment.

This is because people performing it may already feel like they're on display. The conditions for maintaining a safe container are as follows:

- Positive and mutual regard for all involved, like the basic assumption.
- Articulating shared fallibilities. This means that a mistake isn't one person's fault - we work as a team and make mistakes as a team, even if that action is carried out by one person, there's a whole complex system of experiences and contexts which led the person to that one action.
- Maintaining confidentiality. Letting participants know that their performances won't be shared with others, and role modeling that confidentiality.
- Lastly, having genuine curiosity.

So, genuine curiosity leads us to the topic of judgment. Oftentimes, you'll hear people say that they're non-judgmental, but being non-judgmental is just about impossible. We're human and we all have the tendency to make snap judgment - it's how our brain works. The goal isn't to have any judgments at all, but rather to have good judgment, and to be curious and to assume that someone has done something for a good reason. When we try to be non-judgmental our judgment usually ends up leaking out often in the form of "Guess what I'm thinking" questions. We've all heard them - the questions where you know the person asking them already has the correct answer in mind, and they're not going to let up until you say the right thing. These types of questions don't lead to learning, they lead to learners trying to guess what you're thinking.

Good judgment is applying the Basic Assumption. No one comes to work in healthcare hoping to harm patients - we hope! Something has led to the action that we've observed - good or bad - whether it be past experience, level or lack of knowledge, resource availability, or a combination of all three. Our job as facilitators is not to assume that we know the answer - that is being judgmental. Our job is to find out why things happened the way they did, and if necessary, correct the underlying reasons.

So, in class we'll practice something called "Advocacy Inquiry" - this is a form of questioning that allows you to share observations, opinions, and judgments in a non-threatening manner. As it's been said about having good judgment, "Transform your 'WTF' to 'What's their frame?'"