General IPE Debriefing Guidelines for Facilitators

Step 1: Elicit emotions

- Example question: “How did that feel for everyone?”
- Let group decompress - laugh and allow group to relax
- They will often start to spontaneously debrief themselves at this point
- Feel free to discuss “realism” and the difficulty they may have with ‘suspending belief’ - acknowledge challenges of simulation at this point so you can move forward

Step 2: Help participants to understand the interprofessional context of the scenario/event

- Example question: “Do you believe there was any specific IP learning objectives to this scenario?”
- Review the facts of the scenario: “Describe for us what happened”
- Uncover assumptions and mental health models where possible:
  - “Is there something specific you are referring to?”
  - “What do you think was happening for the rest of the team at this point?”
  - “Is there any connection to what you are saying and what the nurse/physio/OT said a minute ago?”
  - “Take me a little further into what you are thinking”
  - “What might be an unspoken assumption you had that led to your decision?”
- Follow up with what participants are saying:
  - Can you help us understand your decision making?
  - I am curious about your decision to...

Step 3: Advocacy/Inquiry Strategy

- Put your thoughts/observations into an ADVOCACY statement and then follow with a probing INQUIRY:
  - ADVOCACY:
    - “I noticed…” “I saw…” “I observed…”
    - “I was really concerned when…”
    - “It is hard to be a team leader…”
    - “You had a really difficult role here…”
  - INQUIRY:
    - “Can you walk me through your thinking when you made that decision?”
    - “Can you tell me what you were thinking when you…?”
    - “I wonder…”
• Using advocacy/inquiry together:
  o “It is hard to challenge a colleague even when they are wrong. What do you think stopped you from correcting them?”
  o “It seemed pretty chaotic when the patient’s condition started to decline. Did anyone know who was in charge?”
  o “That was a challenging scenario - why do you think things played out the way they did?”

• Intersperse your questions with positive comments throughout the debrief: “It was really good to see you communicating with the other health care professionals - can you tell us the outcome of that?”

Step 4: Make link to clinical practice/real life:

• “Has anyone encountered a similar event in practice?”
• “What would be the best/worst case scenario if this was to happen in clinical practice?”
• “What does the literature/research say about this issue?”

Step 5: So what, now what?

• “When you reflect on ________ during the scenario, is there anything you would change or do differently next time?”
• “Are there two key points that stand out in your mind as defining points about this experience?”
• “What do you understand more clearly as a result of the scenario?”
• “Is there anything about this experience that has changed how you will practice in the future?”
• “What assumptions about how we work together need to be changed?”

Tips:

- It is very tempting to tell them what you want them to learn but it is important they come to these conclusions themselves (with some help and direction from explorative questioning)
- You do have to correct errors or misguided thinking but often this can start with a comment from the group themselves. “Does everyone agree with that comment?” or “Does someone else have a different idea about that?”
- As the facilitator you are there to help participants reflect on the experience and learn from it, not to place blame on individuals. Referring to participants by role (i.e. “what do you think the nurse was thinking at this point…”) and not by their name is less confrontational
- Try to encourage the whole group to participate, not just the participants who had an active role. The observers often have a unique and very valuable perspective and can help you debrief the scenario

Adapted from Instructor Development: Simulation-Based Education Design and Debriefing Workshop Notes (Mayo Clinic, March 2009)

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