Revised Standards

Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice® Facilitation

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Standard

Facilitation methods are varied, and use of a specific method is dependent on the needs of the learner and expected learning outcomes. Based on a comprehensive systematic review (INACSL Committee et al., 2025b), recent studies confirm that facilitation involves guiding participants through simulation-based experiences (SBE) to ensure they achieve defined learning objectives.

Operationally, facilitation is the structure and process necessary to effectively conduct simulated-based experiences, while the facilitator is the individual who directs the learning experience that directly impacts the learner (INACSL Committee et al., 2025b). A facilitator is the educator who assumes responsibility and oversight for managing the entire SBE.

Background

Facilitation of a SBE requires a facilitator who has the knowledge, skill, and ability to guide, support, and seek out ways to assist participants in achieving expected outcomes (Alexander et al., 2015; Clapper, 2014; Knowles, 1984; Kolb et al., 2014). To maintain skill as an effective facilitator, one must pursue continuing education and assessment of their facilitation skills (Jeffries et al, 2015; NLN Board of Governors, 2015). Selection of a facilitation method is guided by theory and research (Clapper, 2015).

Facilitation methods may vary based on the learning levels of the participants, the simulation objectives, and the context of the SBE while considering cultural and individual differences that affect learners' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors (Chung et al., 2013; Graham & Atz, 2015; McNiesh, 2015; Paige & Morin, 2015). Facilitation methods may differ when the simu-

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☆ As the science of simulation continues to evolve, so does the need for additions and revisions to the healthcare simulation standards of best practice® (HSSOBP). Therefore, the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice® are living documents.

lation is conducted between healthcare simulationists and participants interacting in real time or when participants interact individually within a virtual learning experience. Facilitators play a pivotal role in guiding learners to achieve specific outcomes and competencies using evidence-based simulation methodologies (Ayaz & Ismail, 2022). They promote the development of critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and judgment by engaging learners in a structured SBE (Alshehri et al., 2023; Chenikova et al., 2020). Potential consequences of not following this standard may include impairing learners' engagement within the simulation and reducing opportunities for learners to meet the expected outcomes of the SBE.

Criteria necessary to meet this standard

1. Effective facilitation requires a facilitator with specific skills and knowledge in simulation pedagogy.
2. The facilitative approach is appropriate to the level of learning, experience, and competency of the participants.
3. Facilitation methods before the SBE include conducting a needs assessment and a pilot test simulation before full implementation [Follow the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ (HSSOBP) Simulation Design] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021b). Facilitation methods also include prebriefing (preparation and briefing) activities to prepare participants for the SBE [Follow the HSSOBP® Prebriefing: Preparation and Briefing] (INACSL Standards Committee et al. (2025c) and determining participant evaluation methods [HSSOBP™ Evaluation of Learning and Performance] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021a). The facilitator discusses ground rules to create and maintain a safe learning and noncompetitive environment [Follow the HSSOBP® Prebriefing: Preparation and Briefing & HSSOBP® Professional Integrity] (Brown et al., 2024; INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025c; INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025e; Rudolph et al., 2014).
4. Facilitation methods during a SBE involve the delivery of cues (predetermined and/or unplanned) aimed at assisting participants in achieving expected outcomes.
5. Facilitation after and beyond the SBE aims to support participants in achieving expected outcomes.

Criterion 1. Effective facilitation requires a facilitator with specific skills and knowledge in simulation pedagogy (Adanez-Martinez et al., 2023).

Required elements:

- The facilitator demonstrates competency in simulation pedagogy through:
  ○ Incorporation of the HSSOBP®.
  ○ Ongoing reflection on and assessment of their simulation-based teaching skills, knowledge, and facilitation performance (Jeffries et al., 2015; Leighton et al., 2018; NLN Board of Governors, 2015).
- The facilitator acquires specific initial education on the use of simulation through formal coursework and training and participates in ongoing continuing educational offerings and/or targeted work with an experienced mentor (Adanez-Martinez et al., 2023; Alexander et al, 2015; Hayden et al, 2014; Lioce et al., 2024; Ozkara San, et al., 2023; Society of Simulation in, 2021; Terpstra & King, 2021; Thomas & Kellgren, 2017).
- The facilitator possesses and demonstrates a substantial skill set related to (Moulton et al., 2017; Tutticc et al., 2017):
  - Fostering and role modeling professional integrity [Follow the HSSOBP® Professional Integrity] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025e).
  - Applying principles of experiential, contextual, constructivist, sociocultural, and transformative educational theories as well as systems and organizational change theories

(Clapper, 2015; Jeffries, 2021; Kolb, 2014; Thomas & Kellgren, 2017).
- Recognizing and addressing how the diversity of participants and others involved in the SBE may impact on the learning experience (Chung et al., 2013; Foronda et al., 2016; McNiesh, 2015; Moulton et al., 2017; Paige & Morin, 2015; Palominos et al., 2021; Smallheer et al., 2022).
- Application of skills in facilitation includes displaying genuine mutual respect, creating a partnership for learning, coaching, developing a dynamic goal-oriented process, managing conflict among participants, and promoting critical and reflective thinking (Moulton et al., 2017).
- Creating and maintaining simulation fidelity by best practice and use of simulation technology (Brown et al., 2024).
- Identifying participants' knowledge and performance gaps and knowing when and how to respond to participants' actions throughout the SBE (Thomas & Kellgren, 2017).
- Providing accurate, specific, and timely feedback (Moulton et al., 2017; Rudolph et al., 2014).
- Utilizing theory-driven method or model for debriefing practices [Follow the HSSOBP® The Debriefing Process] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025a).
- The facilitator has familiarized themselves with all aspects of the intended SBE. This includes being familiar with the prebriefing (preparation and briefing), the SBE itself and methods for cueing, scenario scripting, and the selected debriefing and evaluation methods.

Criterion 2. The facilitative approach is appropriate to the level of learning, experience, and competency of the participants.

Required elements:

- The facilitator assesses the needs of the participants to include preferred approaches to learning, abilities, cultural differences, knowledge, and skill level of participants [Follow the HSSOBP™ Simulation Design] (Chung et al., 2013; INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021b; McNiesh, 2015; Palominos et al., 2021).
- The facilitator determines the facilitative approach during the design of the SBE [Follow the HSSOBP™ Simulation Design] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021b).
  ○ Utilizing facilitation methods that are appropriate to the type of modality and fidelity used in the simulation experience. Modalities may include manikin-based, embedded simulation participant, technology-enhanced, virtual reality, gaming, augmented reality, or hybrid experience [Use terms listed in the SSH Simulation Dictionary 3rd edition] (Lioce et al., 2024).
  ○ Allowing the simulation scenario to progress with or without interruption depending on the level of the learners and objectives of the SBE (Luctkar-Flude et al., 2017).
  ○ Achieving scenario fidelity by delivering consistent SBE across cohorts of learners (Jeffries et al., 2015).
  ○ Considering the opportunity to collect assessment and evaluation data of the SBE through observation of simulations and monitoring for appropriateness of participants' performance [Follow the HSSOBP™ Evaluation of Learning and Performance] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021a).

Criterion 3. Facilitation methods prior to the SBE include all activities before full implementation. These activities are defined as prebriefing which is used as a broad term to describe participant preparation and briefing (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025d). This preparation and briefing for the SBE is to promote psychological safety and engagement for participants (Ozkara San et al., 2023).

Required elements:

- The facilitator conducts a needs assessment and a pilot test of the simulation before full implementation [Follow the HSSOBP™ Simulation Design] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021b).
- The facilitator provides participants with information and/or preparatory activities, instruction, skills review, and practice time before the SBE [Follow the HSSOBP® Prebriefing: Preparation and Briefing] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025e; Ozkara San et al., 2023).
- The facilitator discusses ground rules to create and maintain a safe learning and noncompetitive environment [Follow the HSSOBP® Professional Integrity] (Brown et al., 2024; INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025e; Rudolph et al., 2014).
- The facilitator acknowledges that mistakes may happen and will be reflected upon during the debriefing.
- The facilitator acknowledges the simulated nature of the learning environment (McNiesh, 2015).
- The facilitator encourages learners to commit to a fiction contract, promoting engagement by suspending disbelief and participating in the SBE as if it were real (Rudolph et al., 2014).
- The facilitator holds a prebriefing at a designated time before the SBE in which the amount of time may vary depending on the modality and complexity of the SBE [Follow the HSSOBP® Prebriefing: Preparation and Briefing] (Chamberlain, 2015; INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025e; McDermott, 2016; Moulton et al., 2017; Page-Cutrara, 2015; Rutherford-Hemming et al., 2019).
- The facilitator determines the appropriate method of learner assessment and evaluation guided by the established learning objectives (Follow the HSSOBP™ Design & Evaluation of Learning and Performance (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021b; INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021a).
- The facilitator communicates to participants how they will be assessed and evaluated.

Criterion 4. Facilitation methods during a SBE include participant evaluation and involve the delivery of cues (predetermined and/or unplanned) aimed to assist participants in achieving expected outcomes.

Required elements:

- The facilitator assesses/evaluates participants during the SBE using validated/reliable instruments [Follow the HSSOBP™ Evaluation of Learning and Performance] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021a).
- The facilitator delivers cues (also referred to as prompts or triggers) to draw participants' attention to critical or noncritical information related to the context of the scenario or case. Cues can be predetermined or unplanned:
  - Predetermined cues are incorporated into the simulation design based on common and anticipated actions by participants [Follow the HSSOBP™ Simulation Design] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2021b).
  - Unplanned cues (also referred to as lifesavers) are delivered in response to unanticipated participant actions (Dieckmann et al., 2010).
- The facilitator delivers cues to help redirect participants when the simulated reality is unclear or when participants need redirection to obtain expected learning outcomes (Luctkar-Flude et al., 2017; Paige & Morin, 2013).
- The facilitator executes cues during the simulation in a manner that maintains the fidelity of the scenario or case.
- The facilitator delivers clarification cues as needed using a variety of methods, such as laboratory results, moulage, phone calls from providers or other health care departments, comments from patients or family members, or equipment alarms. An embedded participant or standardized patient can also provide cues to manage the unexpected events under the direction of the facilitator.
- The facilitator uses a consistent method and mode of delivery of cues when conducting the same simulation across cohorts of participants to help ensure/enhance a standardized SBE (Terpstra & King, 2021).

Criterion 5. Facilitation after and beyond the simulation experience aims to support participants in achieving expected outcomes.

Required elements:

- The facilitator follows the HSSOBP® The Debriefing Process (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025a).
- The facilitator acknowledges that learning is a continuous and developmental process as participants form new frames or ways of thinking.
- The facilitator maximizes participants' learning outcomes by fostering meaningful reflection, thereby supporting deeper understanding and long-term knowledge integration (Adanez-Martinez et al., 2023; Brown et al., 2024; Ozkara San et al., 2023; Terpstra & King, 2021).
- The facilitator provides participants with time to reflect on and process new knowledge, contemplate events that transpired, or clarify clinical experiences that conflict with simulation experiences.
- The facilitator addresses issues of professional integrity as needed [Follow the HSSOBP® Professional Integrity] (INACSL Standards Committee et al., 2025e).

Original INACSL standards

The INACSL Board of Directors. (2011). Standard IV: Facilitation methods. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, 7, s12–s13.

The INACSL Board of Directors. (2011). Standard V: Simulation facilitator. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, 7, s14–s15.

Subsequent INACSL standards

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About the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL)

The International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) is the global leader in transforming practice to improve patient safety through excellence in health care simulation. INACSL is a community of practice for simulation where members can network with simulation leaders, educators, researchers, and industry partners. INACSL also provided the original living documents INACSL Standards of Best Practice: Simulation^{SM}, an evidence-based framework to guide simulation design, implementation, debriefing, evaluation, and research. The Healthcare

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