

## Enhancing Patient-Centred Suicide Risk Assessments through Collaboratively Designed Virtual Simulations

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Published 12/04/2023

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**Categories:** Medical Education, Medical Simulation

**Keywords:** lived experience, suicide risk assessment, suicide risk, skills and simulation training, simulation medicine

**How to cite this abstract**

Fruitman H, Sliemers S, Tsuda M, et al. (December 04, 2023) Enhancing Patient-Centred Suicide Risk Assessments through Collaboratively Designed Virtual Simulations. Cureus 15(12): a1072

### Abstract

**Background:** There is significant variability in suicide risk management skills across health professions.<sup>1</sup> The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has identified a need to train clinicians in patient-centred suicide risk assessments. Interprofessional educators and lived experience advisors developed a virtual simulation for interprofessional learners on how to conduct a suicide risk assessment. Collaborating with lived experience advisors to design and deliver health professional education can improve patient-centred care.<sup>2</sup> It can also improve learners' knowledge and skills, which can lead to meaningful change in health care practices.<sup>3</sup>

**Objectives:** The simulated suicide risk assessment has several learning objectives:

1. Create a therapeutic alliance with the patient by demonstrating respect, empathy and compassion.
2. Demonstrate the ability to gather information that is necessary to determine suicide risk.
3. Integrate information (direct and collateral) obtained from a suicide risk assessment to formulate a level of risk.
4. Review and discuss interventions to support the patient based on information gathered during the suicide risk assessment.

**Description:** This 2.5-hour simulation included a pre-simulation briefing session, a suicide risk assessment with a simulated participant and a post-simulation debriefing session. It involved inpatient and outpatient scenarios that were developed by interprofessional educators and lived experience advisors. Lived experience advisors participated in the pre-briefing and also gave learners feedback about their patient-centred approach in the simulation. The simulation was delivered through WebEx.

Since 2020, 117 nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, behaviour therapists, psychologists, externs and students have participated in the simulation.

**Impact:** We evaluated the training using Moore's framework, which measures engagement, satisfaction, knowledge and competence.<sup>4</sup> Pre- and post-evaluation data was collected from 80 learners.

What the evaluation found

- 18% increase in confidence in conducting suicide risk assessments (across all topics covered in the simulation objectives)
- 90% overall satisfaction with the training
- 92% intent to change practice after the training
- 84% agreed or strongly agreed that the simulation enhanced their learning
- 88% agreed or strongly agreed that the debriefing enhanced their learning

**What learners reported:** The findings show how simulations that are designed by health care professionals and lived experience advisors promote a patient-centred approach to suicide risk assessment. Learners

highlighted this strength:

“It is valuable to hear from their [lived experience advisors] perspective, and the recommendation to lead with empathy and compassion ... to help clients find alternatives to suicide, i.e., hope.”

“I really appreciated this piece. It helped me remember why we do the suicide risk assessment to assess level of risk, but also to show up and allow people to feel heard.”

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