

## Difficult Conversations - Let Simulation Help You!

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**Abstract**

Poster Topic: Education; Safety/Quality

**Background:**

Effective communication skills are a core competency of health professionals, yet educators struggle with teaching these effectively. A needs assessment revealed that Clinical Support Nurses (CSNs) on a surgical pediatric unit at The Hospital for Sick Children felt ill prepared when having difficult conversations with colleagues and families. Additionally, CNSs articulated a need to develop their communication and leadership skills. In response to this need a quality improvement project was undertaken to increase CSN's self-efficacy in having difficult conversations with colleagues and families. Difficult conversations are commonly encountered by CNSs and other health care providers. Having the necessary communication skills to deal with such issues is important to enhance unit functioning, strengthen relationships with patients, families and colleagues and lead change. A difficult conversations workshop was created that consisted of a 40 minute small-group educational session that introduced participants to a communication framework and 2 simulations based on the CSN's personal experiences. Both simulations required CSNs to engage in difficult conversations. After-action debriefing discussions regarding communication followed each simulation. 41 CSN's participated in the workshop. Results indicated that simulation provided a safe experiential learning experience that allowed CSNs to practice and improve their communication skills when having a difficult conversation.

**Description:**

During the workshop participants will engage in discussions regarding the development and evaluation of a communication skills workshop. Participants will also engage in an activity to develop a communication scenario.

**Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify the components required to develop an effective communication workshop.
2. Develop a communication

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