Facilitating Simulation Using Actors and Standardised Patients: Tools and Techniques

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The use of actors or community members as Standardised Patients (SP) is being embraced more and more in healthcare simulation. Barrows (1987) defines a SP’s as a person ... who has been carefully coached to simulate an actual patient so accurately that the simulation cannot be detected by a skilled clinician”.

The use of SP enables simulation to go beyond skills based education and to encompass a more holistic approach to the learning experience.

This workshop will provide guidelines to assist facilitators in preparing actors or SP to present holistically relevant healthcare simulation.

The aim of this 90 minute workshop is to:

• demonstrate how to develop a template for creating scenario based improvisation scripts to guide actors and SP in the simulation environment

• outline techniques for facilitators to work with actors and the SP to define the parameters and action of the scene to be improvised

• provide facilitators with technical skills to undertake pre and post production management processes

• provide direction on design and production requirements to ensure the illusion of reality is maintained.

Using case scenarios, this workshop will summarise the development of resources to support the use of actors and SP in a variety of scenarios. It will also discuss the need for training to emphasise psychological fidelity, with the aim of providing a training workforce with all the usual benefits of simulated patients but with the flexibility of a valid performance that mimics the real health environment.