# The PEARLS Healthcare Debriefing Tool

Healthcare debriefings are facilitated conversations following a clinical or simulated event that aim to improve future clinical practice. Debriefings should contribute to a safe learning environment, actively engage participants, and focus on learning and improvement. The various approaches to healthcare debriefing may confuse educators. The PEARLS (Promoting Excellence And Reflective Learning in Simulation) framework addresses this problem by integrating three common educational strategies: learner self-assessment, focused facilitation (including advocacy-inquiry), and providing information or direct feedback/teaching.

## The PEARLS Healthcare Debriefing Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Sample Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Setting the Scene</td>
<td>Create a safe context for learning</td>
<td>“Let’s spend X minutes debriefing. Our goal is to improve how we work together and care for our patients.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Reactions</td>
<td>Explore feelings</td>
<td>“Can you please share a short summary of the case?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Clarify facts</td>
<td>“What was the working diagnosis? Does everyone agree?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Explore variety of performance domains</td>
<td>“What aspects do you want to change and why?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application/Summary</td>
<td>Identify take-aways</td>
<td>“What aspects were managed well and why?”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The back expands on the analysis phase, highlighting performance domains and providing three approaches for analyzing events.

## The Analysis Phase

The analysis phase can be used to explore a variety of performance domains:

- Decision Making
- Technical Skills
- Communication
- Resource Utilization
- Leadership
- Situational Awareness
- Teamwork

### Performance Domains

- Decision Making
- Technical Skills
- Communication
- Resource Utilization
- Leadership
- Situational Awareness
- Teamwork

### Three Approaches

1. **Learner Self-Assessment**
   - Promote reflection by asking learners to assess their own performance
   - Sample Phrases: “What aspects were managed well and why?”

2. **Focused Facilitation**
   - Probe deeper on key aspects of performance
   - Sample Phrases: “What aspects do you want to change and why?”

3. **Provide Information**
   - Teach to close clear knowledge gaps as they emerge and provide directive feedback as needed
   - Sample Phrases: “I noticed [behavior]. Next time you may want to consider [suggested behavior] because [rationale].”

The PEARLS Healthcare Debriefing Tool helps educators adapt their debriefing for a variety of goals, including skills improvement and team training. The tool supports educator training and serves as a cognitive aid which integrates debriefing strategies during healthcare debriefings.

## References


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