

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

After a Stressful or Trauma Simulation

Recognize Signs of Student Distress

Emotional Signs: • Tearfulness or crying • Irritability or withdrawal • Appearing overwhelmed or embarrassed • Emotionally unresponsive appearance (flat affect) • Shutting down	Physical Signs: • Rapid breathing • Shaking or fidgeting • Looking pale or flushed • Difficulty speaking or focusing • Tense muscles or rigid posture • Sweating or clammy hands
Behavioral Signs: • Avoiding debriefing • Leaving the room suddenly • Self-critical comments (e.g., "I failed," "I'm terrible at this") • Silence when normally engaged	Key Reminders for Faculty: • Maintain psychological safety • Emphasize learning, not performance • Normalize emotional responses • Encourage reflection rather than criticism • Provide support resources when needed

Immediate Faculty Response (In the Moment) — Pause & Acknowledge

Verbal Response	• "That was an intense scenario." • "It's normal to have strong reactions."
Normalize Emotions <i>(Remind students simulation can feel very real)</i>	• "Many students feel stressed after trauma simulations." • "Your reactions are understandable."
Offer a Brief Rest / Self-Regulation	Encourage: • Slow breathing • A short break or stepping out of the room • Water or other basic self-care
Avoid Judgment	Do <u>not</u> say: • "You shouldn't feel that way." • "It's just a simulation." • "Why didn't you...?" • "That was wrong." • "You should know this by now."

Support During Debriefing

Encourage Reflection ~ Use Psychological Safety Principles

Helpful Prompts	• “What emotions did you notice during the scenario?” • “Which part felt most stressful?” • “What helped you cope or manage the situation?”
Key Faculty Behaviors	• Listen actively without interrupting • Validate students’ feelings • Emphasize that performance does not reflect personal worth
Remind Students	• “Simulation is a learning environment. Mistakes are expected and valuable for growth.”

Quick Coping Strategies to Offer Students

Grounding Techniques	• Slow breathing (4 seconds inhale, 6 seconds exhale) • Notice five things in the room around you
Cognitive Reframing	• “What might you do differently next time?”
Peer Support	• Encourage supportive discussion with classmates

Be Supportive

Helpful Phrases	• “I noticed that scenario may have been difficult. Would you like to talk about it privately?” • “What was going through your mind during that moment?” • “How are you feeling after the scenario?” • “What kind of support would be helpful right now?”
Situations of Concern	Faculty should follow up when: • Persistent crying • Panic symptoms • Withdrawal from participation • Statements of extreme self-criticism
Refer Students	• Student counseling services • Faculty advisor • Simulation program support