

STANDARDIZED PATIENTS IN MEDICAL & LEGAL ASSESSMENTS

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OBJECTIVE

The incidence of Domestic Violence (DV) has created a need for increased professional awareness and expertise. UNM's School of Law (LS) and Department of Emergency Medicine (ED) along with NM Legal Aid collaborated with the School of Medicine standardized patient (SP) program to develop DV formative performance assessment cases to assess the knowledge and skills of Family Law students and ED residents.

METHODS

Four case scripts and eight checklists were developed. Cases focused on overt or covert DV with components of immigration and tribal laws. Three SPs were selected for each case and participated in 10 hours of training. During training SPs reviewed the medical and legal interview process and associated documents, simulated emotional/physical trauma and met with a DV victim. Assessment interviews were fifteen minutes for ED residents and thirty minutes for law students. SPs assessed participants' communication skills (global rating scale) and ability to obtain critical history items (checklist).

Two cases were used for both groups in the initial assessment. Educational interventions followed including presentations, handouts and cross-training sessions. Two new cases were developed for post-intervention assessment. Following both assessment sessions, participants completed surveys evaluating perceived preparedness/competence (knowledge and interview skills), and personal values regarding DV.

RESULTS

18 ED residents and 26 LS students completed assessments, interventions and surveys. There were no statistically significant changes in communication skills or critical history gathering by either group.

Post-assessment surveys indicated the students felt the experience:

- provided opportunities to learn new information and skills and review prior knowledge
- helped them feel more competent
- stimulated an interest in learning more about DV

The LS professor observed that student scores on a DV exam question improved from previous years. She attributed this to the performance assessments.

SPs felt cases were challenging and emotionally draining; however, they perceived the assessments to be valuable to the students and the larger community. All SPs asked to be recast if cases were repeated.

CONCLUSION

The value of SPs is not limited to healthcare education. This pilot project demonstrated the value of using SPs in assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of DV training. We concluded that educational intervention should include interviewing and communication skills training in order to improve student scores.

CHALLENGES

Case Development

- Collaborating between disciplines
- Differing ED & LS case components
- Unique ED & LS checklists
- Expanding scripts to include ED & LS details
- Obtaining pertinent tribal documents

Working with Multi Disciplines

- Educating Law faculty about performance assessment
- Learning legal aspects of DV
- Scheduling conflicts
- Creating surveys/assessment tools
- Planning logistics
- Varying learning objectives (ED & LS)

Trainers

- Recruiting: 1-on-1 conversation to assess SP sensitivity to DV
- Casting: Matching case demographics
- Training: Longer to include ED & LS components
- Creating new training techniques to explore victim's feelings

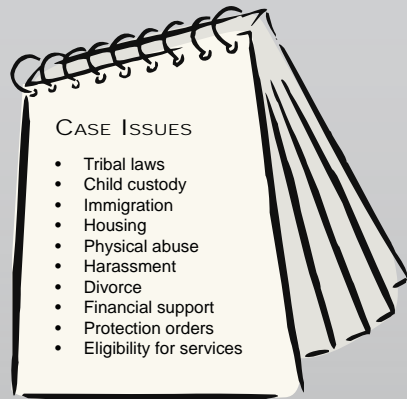


New Mexico's Unique Demographics

- Large Native American population:
 - 19 pueblos, 2 Apache reservations and the Navajo Nation
 - Each has it's own tribal code set of laws and judicial system
 - New Mexico state courts and police officers are legally bound to respect and enforce the tribal orders
 - Minority majority state with documented and undocumented immigrants

Standardized Patients

- Increased training commitment
- Role playing with experts from differing disciplines
- Differing interviews (ED & LS) means learning 2 scripts per case
- Incorporating information from ED and LS experts into roll
- Performing same day assessments with ED & LS
 - Evaluating with differing checklist (ED & LS)
 - Emotionally draining performances



CASE ISSUES

- Tribal laws
- Child custody
- Immigration
- Housing
- Physical abuse
- Harassment
- Divorce
- Financial support
- Protection orders
- Eligibility for services

EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS FOR ED & LS LEARNERS

- Lectures from legal and medical DV experts
- Interdisciplinary DV case discussion
- DV lecture by Pueblo Legal Aid Attorney
- DV resource materials distributed
- Presentation of personal DV experience by law student to LS peers

WHAT WE LEARNED

Future Assessments

- Interdisciplinary collaboration resulted in unanticipated exchange of approaches to assessment
- SPs enhance student motivation
- Pre & post tests help evaluate teaching effectiveness
- DV didactic improved Law student interest but not skills

