Best Practices for Using Virtual Simulation

Virtual simulation is an interactive method of reinforcing knowledge and skills learned in a traditional classroom. Below, we list ways that faculty can use virtual simulation to support learners through the decision-making stage of the Circle of Learning.

Keep in mind that lecture in and of itself will not make strong healthcare providers – they need to be engaged and active in the learning experience!

Before launching into virtual simulation activities, be sure that learners are comfortable with their understanding of course material.

Emphasize that virtual simulation is a tool to prepare them for real, human patient simulation so that they see the benefit upfront.

Focus learning objectives on clinical reasoning and prioritization to build each learner's confidence in decision making.

Don't use virtual simulation in a silo; instead, integrate the same patient case in prior course readings and simulations to follow.

Be willing to get creative with the format. Group discussions and flipping the classroom are two methods that can complement virtual simulation.

Use virtual simulation as a benchmark that students must work toward before moving onto the next stage of learning.

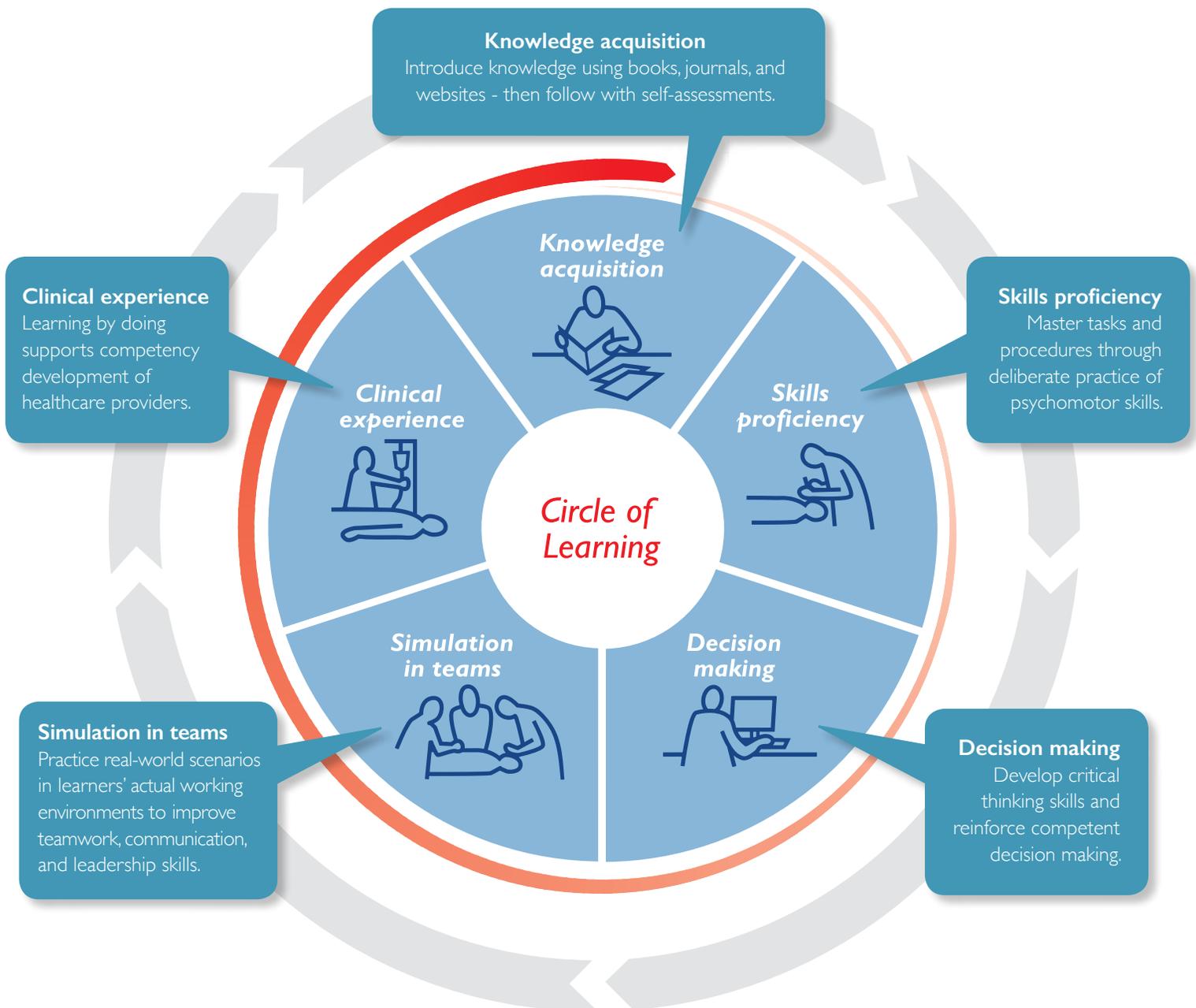Encourage learners to reflect on the concrete feedback they receive after completing each patient case.

Be patient and offer reassurance as you move your learners from virtual patients and to hands-on patient simulation.

Learning is a process. As faculty, you can help make this a smooth process by moving learners into and out of each learning stage with ease.

Learn more at Laerdal.com/vSim

How do you achieve balance in your teaching approach?

It's easy to overlook the importance of teaching decision-making as its own step in the learning process. But, taking a leap directly into high-fidelity simulation can potentially leave learners overwhelmed and without confidence.

How balanced is your teaching approach in terms of advancing learners through the learning cycle?

Knowledge acquisition
Introduce knowledge using books, journals, and websites - then follow with self-assessments.

Clinical experience
Learning by doing supports competency development of healthcare providers.

Skills proficiency
Master tasks and procedures through deliberate practice of psychomotor skills.

Simulation in teams
Practice real-world scenarios in learners' actual working environments to improve teamwork, communication, and leadership skills.

Decision making
Develop critical thinking skills and reinforce competent decision making.

Knowledge acquisition

Clinical experience

Skills proficiency

Simulation in teams

Decision making

Circle of Learning

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