A Second Life for Interprofessional Education
Using Simulations to Engage Online Learners

Background
Online education has forced a change in traditional Interprofessional Education (IPE). These students are not only regularly using technology, but they expect engaging and innovative learning applications to bridge the distance-gap. Simulations support students’ learning with real-world practical knowledge and skills.

Purpose
Experience the value of contributions made by a diverse team of professionals - healthcare/non-healthcare, through a competency-based, interactive simulation for improved individual and population health outcomes.

Learning Objectives
- Collaborate as a team, while interacting with other professions to develop a health/wellness plan.
- Identify impact of social determinants on quality health care and wellness.
- Respect resources/assets that other professions contribute to addressing homelessness and related social/health problems.
- Reflect on benefits of working within a team to address population-based social/health challenges.

Methods
Interprofessional teams have included graduate students from public health, nursing, medicine and social work.

1. Review interactive e-learning module about IPE
2. Create an avatar - practice navigating through the simulation application
3. Review student expectations
4. Review case story and other materials
5. Participate in interactive simulation
6. Self-assess competence using group discussion format

Evaluation
- Use the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) competencies for formative assessment.
- Evaluate teams’ strengths/weaknesses using the Interprofessional Collaborator Assessment Rubric (ICAR).
- Identify social determinants of health and challenges experienced by an individual experiencing homelessness.

Lessons Learned
- Practice in Second Life™ beforehand
- Provide clear expectations
- Use a facilitator to guide the conversation
- Allow “think-time”
- Brief/debrief for self-reflection and learning

The case story illustrates the impact that social determinants of health have on individuals experiencing homelessness and how access to an interprofessional care team can improve their lives.

Thirty-six-year-old Johanne does not fit the stereotype of a homeless person. Not long ago, she was living what would be considered a healthy life with her family. When her husband died and she lost her job, she found herself in a downward spiral and her situation dramatically changed.


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“I found the activity INCREDIBLY valuable. The perspective of each student is very different, which is interesting. The simulation helped provide a more raw and realistic example of how the social determinants of health make such a critical impact on an individual and community.” - MPH Student

“I think it was nice to be able to interact with the CHS [public health] and medical students and to address the issues presented as a group. Hearing the input from other provider roles highlighted issues that I feel that I may have missed or issues that I was not immediately thinking about.” - NP Student

“I think that this simulation was pretty cool and it showed how different disciplines can collaborate and seek a common goal. Our roles in public health are unique and I think that your perspective and insight was valuable.” - MPH Student

Qualitative Outcomes