

BCH Academy Seminar: Teaching Learners How to Navigate Difficult Conversations
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Situation: The hospital has set the goal of improving its communication with families about determination of death by neurologic criteria (DNC; sometimes called "brain death").

Background:

- In a situation of death by neurologic criteria, some bodily functions may be present (e.g. heart is beating) but the patient has experienced irreversible neurological injury such that they will not regain consciousness and will not be able to breathe without mechanical ventilator support.
- A determination of DNC is made by standardized, structured clinical examinations.
- After a determination of DNC, the patient is understood to be dead and so mechanical ventilation is discontinued.

Assessment: In addition to their emotional responses about the death of a loved one, families in this situation may struggle to understand how a person with some bodily functions can be dead, and/or have religious or cultural backgrounds that influence their concept of death and what can/should be done medically in this situation.

Pair up with one or two partners to complete an educational plan for how you might teach learners how to navigate conversations about this topic, in order to prepare them for their professional roles. You are not (just) teaching them about DNC, but about how to communicate about it.

Who would your learners be? (profession/s, roles, practice settings, levels of training/experience...)

What are two of your key learning objectives for these learners in your session?

"By the end of this session, learners will be able to..."

1)

2)

Who would your teachers or other participants be? (profession/s, roles, practice settings, levels of training/experience...)

What format would you use? (group size, setting/location, length of activity...)

What types of activities would you plan? (didactics, discussions, role-plays, other exercises...)

What resources would you need? (space, technology, literature or other media resources...)

What are some potential challenges or barriers you anticipate in teaching this session?

What is at least one way you might assess your learners, to see whether your learning objectives were met?

