

# SAFETY: TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

Effective teamwork and communication are critical to functioning safely in health care. They help groups navigate competing priorities, overcome issues associated with human factors, and reduce the risk of error.  
(Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Lesson PS 103)

Communicate with patients, families, communities, and professionals in health and other fields in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the promotion and maintenance of health and the prevention and treatment of disease.  
(Interprofessional Communication, IPEC Core Competencies, 2016)

## IHI Basic Tools and Techniques for Safety through Team Communication\*



### Briefings/Team Huddles

Team should host regular and/or impromptu short, structured meetings in which the team comes together to talk about a situation. Open and timely communication is key to team safety.

01



### Debriefing

Teams should schedule concise discussions to occur after completion of an activity/event/situation. Debrief should address: 1) identify what happened, 2) what was learned, and 3) what can be done better next time.

02



### Critical Language

Teams should use an agreed-upon set of terms that indicates to all members of the team that there is a problem. Team members should use plain language and address issues in a timely manner.

03



### Psychological Safety

All team members are responsible for reinforcing team psychological safety. This occurs when a team member feels comfortable expressing an opinion, mentioning problems, or correcting errors.

04

\* Adapted from: <https://www.ihi.org/education/ihiopenschool/Courses/Documents/SummaryDocuments/PS%20103%20SummaryFINAL.pdf>



OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT  
**OFFICE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS**  
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Interprofessional Education (IPE) offers activities to practice team communication:  
All Professions Day, Team Simulations, Grand Rounds, and Unity Clinic, and more.

[OUHSC-IPE@ouhsc.edu](mailto:OUHSC-IPE@ouhsc.edu) <https://ipe.ouhsc.edu/>