

Your People Are In Here: A Look Inside ASPE's Special Interest Groups

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What does it look like when a group of simulation professionals finds its people? For many ASPE members, the answer lies inside a Special Interest Group — or SIG. On April 8, ASPE's Communication and Connections Committee hosted "SIGs in Action: Tools, Resources, and Community," a panel featuring six SIG leaders who shared what their groups do, why they exist, and what they hope to build. Facilitated by Dan Brown (Emory University) and Towanda Underdue (Johns Hopkins School of Medicine), the conversation was warm, specific, and — above all — energizing.

Each panelist was asked the same question: what gap is your SIG filling, and how are your members filling it? The answers were as different as the communities themselves — and together, they made a compelling case that whatever corner of this field you care about most, there's a SIG for that.

Meet the SIGs

Hybrid Simulation SIG — Carol Fleishman, Johns Hopkins

Back in 2011, there were two camps: the tech people and the SP people. The Hybrid Simulation SIG was born from the question of what happens when you bring them together. Today the SIG is a community of practice for any multi-modal simulation that pairs task trainers or technology with the irreplaceable human element that SPs bring — think a learner practicing a clinical skill on a task trainer while working alongside an SP who provides the full communicative and emotional dimension of the encounter. The SIG is focused on sharing materials, discussing equipment, and helping members learn from each other's experience — and Carol is actively looking for new members and leaders who want to help shape what the Hybrid SIG becomes next.

Interested in membership or leadership? Reach out to Carol: cfleish2@jhmi.edu

SPs Beyond Healthcare SIG — Denise LaMarra, University of Pennsylvania

Here's something worth sitting with: ASPE's mission statement doesn't actually mention healthcare. Denise LaMarra and the SPs Beyond Healthcare SIG are taking that seriously. Born out of work alongside police departments in Toronto, this SIG exists for everyone who has ever thought "SP methodology could work here" outside a clinical setting — dentistry, veterinary medicine, leadership development, corporate training, you name it. As emerging technologies shift how some programs operate, LaMarra sees expanding the field's sphere of influence as both a professional imperative and a practical one: bringing SP methodology into new sectors creates real opportunities for additional revenue streams and program stability. The SIG's promise is simple: don't

recreate the wheel. From case templates to marketing plans, they want to make your life easier and strengthen the profession at the same time.

Interested in membership? Reach out to Denise: lamarra@upenn.edu

Disability SIG — Shauna Ikaiahifo, University of Arizona

Consider this: 80 percent of physicians report feeling unconfident when working with disabled patients — even though disabled people engage with the health system more than any other population and experience some of the worst outcomes. That gap is exactly what the Disability SIG exists to close. The SIG thinks about the whole ecosystem: not just how disability is portrayed in simulation scenarios, but learners with disabilities, SP educators with disabilities, and the ways simulation centers can make participation more accessible for everyone. Allies are welcome and encouraged, though some sessions are reserved as closed spaces for disabled SP educators. Shauna's vision is ambitious and specific: a disability specialist in every simulation center, and a field that finally reflects the full range of people it serves.

Interested in membership? Reach out to Shauna: sikaiahifo@arizona.edu

GTA/MUTA SIG — Alyssa Ledesma, Oregon Health & Science University

Gynecological and male urogenital teaching associates are highly trained individuals who draw on their own bodies to teach sensitive clinical exams — and for too long, this work has been under-resourced and under-recognized. The GTA/MUTA SIG is changing that. Grounded in trauma-informed care, the SIG covers everything from real-time feedback and respectful communication to draping technique and power dynamics awareness. With around 80 members and 20-30 regular attendees, it's also genuinely a place where people drop in with a very specific problem and leave with real support. Justification toolkits help programs make the financial case for this work. And at conference, they're bringing the energy with both a full-day pre-con intensive and a happy hour — because community is also built outside the session room.

Interested in membership? Reach out to Alyssa: ledesmaa@ohsu.edu

Gender and Sexual Minority SIG — Cori Maskart, University of Pennsylvania

The GSM SIG is newer, but the need it fills is not. Cori Maskart founded this SIG to create a dedicated space for collectivizing best practices around GSM identities in SP methodology — breaking down heteronormativity in scenario design, accurately reflecting the patient populations learners will serve, and working through how programs move forward with integrity in a shifting political climate. What works in one region or institution may look different somewhere else, and the SIG holds space for all of it. Two conference sessions plus a social outing: the GSM SIG isn't just talking about community, they're actively building it.

Interested in membership? Reach out to Cori: maskartc@upenn.edu

IPE Simulation SIG — Dr. Joseph Buhain, Florida Gulf Coast University

Interprofessional education — two or more specialties learning together — is where healthcare's future is headed, and the IPE Simulation SIG is making sure ASPE is at the table. The SIG's work focuses on aligning accreditation standards across IPEC,

INACSL, and SSH with ASPE best practices, positioning the association as the bridge and foundation the field needs. Dr. Buhain is candid about his hopes for the group: he wants to see more active participation, broader collaboration, and new co-leaders who are ready to help drive that growth. If big-picture, cross-disciplinary work is your thing, this is your SIG.

Interested in membership or co-leadership? Reach out to Joseph: jbuhain@fgcu.edu

More Than Meetings

Across every SIG on the panel, a theme kept surfacing: the most valuable thing a SIG offers isn't the meeting itself, it's what the meeting makes possible. Real resources — justification toolkits, case libraries, accessibility guides, accreditation expertise — that members can actually use. A low-barrier place to show up when you're stuck. A community of people who get it, because they're living it too.

These are not obligatory committees. They are communities built by people who care deeply about their work and about each other. If you haven't found your SIG yet, now is a great time to look.

See Them at the Annual Conference

Several SIGs have sessions at the upcoming [ASPE Annual Conference](#). Come find your people in person:

Hybrid Simulation SIG: Monday, June 22, 1:15-2:15 PM — Hybrid Simulation SIG: Considerations for Combining SP & Technical Methodologies

GTA/MUTA SIG: Pre-Conference, Saturday June 20, 11:00 AM-5:00 PM — Applying ASPE's GTA-MUTA Standards of Best Practice: From Principles to Practice. [Sign up here.](#)

Monday, June 22, 2:30-3:30 PM — Exploring GTA/MUTA Train the Trainer Approaches and Strategies. Plus a happy hour — details to come!

Disability SIG: Monday, June 22, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM — “Nothing About Us Without Us” Disability in Context: Where We've Been, Where We're Going, & How SP Methodology Can Help. Plus a lunch gathering — watch for details from Shauna.

Gender and Sexual Minority SIG: Tuesday, June 23, 2:00-3:00 PM — Transcending Tensions: Perspectives from the Gender & Sexual Minority SIG on Current Realities & Future Directions

Tuesday, June 23, 3:15-4:15 PM — Balancing Roles and Boundaries: Self- and SP-Advocacy in the SP Educator's Workplace. Plus a social outing — details to come!

SPs Beyond Healthcare SIG: Tuesday, June 23, 9:15-10:15 AM — SPs Beyond Healthcare: Expanding Simulation Possibilities (ESP)