



Clinical Crunch Busters:



10 Things to Do in Your Nursing Lab or Simulation When Clinical Placements Fall Short

Practice the “No-Go” Skills

If students can’t pass meds or start IVs in the hospital, give them plenty of opportunities in the lab. Set up barcode scanners, eMARs, and med carts so they get the full process down.

Tip: Check out our medication administration simulator. Scan the QR code on the back to learn more!

Run Skill Stations (OSCE-Style)

Break the lab into rotating stations where students perform specific tasks under time pressure. It’s a fun, structured way to check off multiple skills in one session.

Tip: Use timers and score sheets – it keeps students on their toes and adds a bit of healthy competition.

Bring in Other Professions

Team up with pharmacy, respiratory therapy, or medical students for interprofessional simulations. Students learn how to communicate and collaborate.

Tip: Even if you don’t have other programs on campus, role-play works! Have nursing students step into those roles for the scenario.

Tackle the Rare but Critical Scenarios

Think code blues, postpartum hemorrhage, or pediatric emergencies. Students might never see these in clinicals, but they **need** to know what to do.

Tip: Script the event so it escalates quickly – then stop and debrief. Students remember those high-stakes moments.

Keep it Hands-On with Task Trainers

Use low-fidelity trainers for repetitive practice of must-know skills like IV insertion or catheterization.

Tip: Create a “skills open lab” schedule where students can drop in and practice as much as they want.

Make It Real

Don't just focus on the task – build patient care, patient teaching and charting into every lab activity. Have students document their care in an EHR system (or a mock version).

Tip: Include “charting errors” in scenarios and let students catch and correct them.

Simulate Community Care

Hospitals aren't the only setting students need exposure to. Try scenarios like home health visits, telehealth calls, or a school nurse dealing with a diabetic student.

Tip: Use phone role-play for telehealth – it's low-tech but surprisingly effective.

Turn Up the Fidelity

A little moulage (blood, bruises, wounds, edema) goes a long way in making scenarios believable. Standardized patients can add that human touch.

Tip: Don't overthink it – drugstore makeup kits and a willing volunteer can work wonders.

Let Students Lead

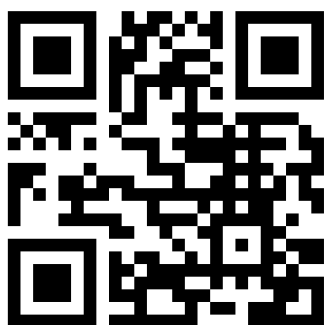
Rotate someone into a “charge nurse” role during sim. They'll have to delegate, prioritize, and manage a team.

Tip: Give the charge nurse incomplete info at first, then feed them updates. It mimics the complexity of a real shift.

Make Debriefing Count

The real learning happens after the scenario. Ask students what went well, what didn't, and how they'd handle it differently next time.

Tip: Try “plus/delta” debriefing – students share one thing that worked (plus) and one thing to change (delta). It keeps things constructive.



Want to learn more? 
Scan the QR code to visit our site!