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# TfS Dispatch #3 | December 2025

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## Why Design Is the Missing Skill in Simulation

One of the biggest misconceptions in simulation is that we are
"replicating reality."

In truth, we are always selecting reality (Kneebone's triad – select,

abstract, represent) — and selection is design.

Every scenario, even the most realistic one, is built from choices:

 - what behaviours to surface, which tensions to foreground, whose
perspectives matter, and which parts of the system you want to
illuminate.

For years, these design decisions have often been invisible.

We focused on the *content* of the scenario rather than the *intent* of the
design.

This is where Transformative Simulation (TfS) changes the field.

**TfS makes design explicit, intentional and theoretically grounded.**

Your choices about design shape:

- what emerges,
- what can be seen,

- what data becomes meaningful,
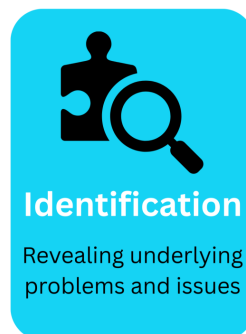- and what transformation becomes possible.

Human factors, organisational psychology, cultural theory, social science and others all become powerful not only in analysing simulation, but in **directing the design** — helping you know which lens to use, which patterns to reveal, and why.

**When we design with intention, we create simulations that are rigorously aligned, meaningful and transformative.**

**The TfS Simulation-Based Intentions (SBI's) are the camera lenses - **It tells you which lens to choose based on what you hope to understand.

- If you want to uncover **latent safety threats**, you use a *wide-angle, systems lens* to reveal interactions, dependencies and vulnerabilities across the system -**Simulation-Based identification**.



**Identification**

Revealing underlying problems and issues

- If you want to **make something work better**, you use the *refinement lens* and fine-tune the frame to illuminate inefficiencies, gaps, variation and opportunities for optimisation - **Simulation-Based Improvement.**
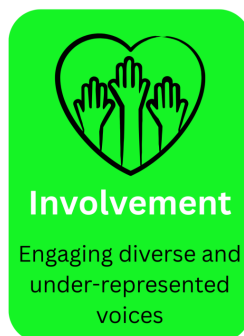


**Improvement**

Making what exists better

- If you want **to unearth and enhance relational, cultural and power dynamics**, you use an *interactional lens with long exposure to* reveal patterns, norms, rituals, and micro-behaviors - or adjust for *contrast* to highlight differences that shape culture - **Simulation-Based Influence.**

**Influence**

Shaping policies, practices and culture

- If you want to **help the system see itself more fully through the eyes of service users or under-represented groups**, you use an *engagement lens* to bring diverse perspectives into view so the system can recognise its own assumptions and blind spots – **Simulation-Based Involvement.**

**Involvement**

Engaging diverse and under-represented voices

- If you want to **empower your workforce or strengthen belonging, civility and psychological safety**, you use a *close-up lens* to focus on roles, identities, emotions and perceptions – especially during moments of change or stress – **Simulation-Based Inclusion.**

**Inclusion**

Empowering workforce participation and well-being

- If you want to **introduce something new into the system**, you use an *implementation lens* and widen the aperture to allow the effect and its potential impact to come clearly into view – **Simulation-Based Innovation.**

**Innovation**

- If you want to **intervene after an incident** or explore what happened and why, you use a curious lens to reconstruct the situation with openness and psychological safety, , enabling deeper contributing factors to be surfaced **- Simulation-Based Intervention.**

**Intervention**

Taking action to address issues

## Try It Yourself: The TfS Design Lens Game

If you want to deepen your understanding of the seven TfS lenses - or help colleagues or students grasp the difference between Identification, Involvement, Innovation and the others - the **TfS Design Lens Game** offers a simple and playful way to do it.

Drawing on real-world examples and their intended purpose, the game invites you to *match the purpose to the correct Simulation-Based Intention*.

It's a quick, engaging way to explore how different lenses shape design choices and reveal different kinds of insight - and a practical tool for teaching, facilitation, and team development.

**Download the game here**

## 🌍 TfS in Practice: Real-World Spotlights

This recurring section highlights real-world examples of Transformative Simulation in action - across geographies and sectors.

**Simulation-Based Improvement**

*Improving the Emergency Department Transfer Process in Dublin, Ireland*

In Ireland, a series of in situ simulations were used to improve time to CT in patients presenting to the emergency department following major trauma.

🔗 **Read the article**

## Simulation-Based Innovation & Identification

*Usability testing of a new innovation and identification of latent safety threats*

In Canada, In situ simulation was used to test a new electronic healthcare records system prior to it going live. Usability testing was conducted and the identification of latent safety threats.

🔗 **Read the article**

## Don't forget!

**Inaugural Webinar – 17 December 2025**

**Guest Speaker:** Dr Julie Mardon, NHS Forth Valley

Join us for our first *TfS in Practice* webinar, where Julie will share how her team embedded Transformative Simulation across an entire health board during a time of system-level challenge and change.

📅 **Tuesday 17 December**

🕐 **13:00–14:00 UK time**

Open to all – 🔗 **Register here**

📣 **Get Involved**

- Want to **present at a webinar**? Let us know.
- Interested in joining the **Strategic Group**? Expressions of interest opening soon.
- Our **TfS WhatsApp group** is launching soon for updates and informal discussion.
- Further resources available here: **https://aspih.org.uk/tfs-infographics/**