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TfS Dispatch #6 | February 2026



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In this edition of TfS Dispatch, we step beyond the Simulation-Based Intentions (SBIs) and the 4Ds to examine the layer that shapes simulation before it begins. We introduce the Five Foundational Pillars of Transformative Simulation - the ethical and strategic architecture that determines what is simulated, why, and in whose interests. We also highlight two real-world examples of Simulation-Based Identification and Involvement in practice in Denmark and the UK, a recent publication, and invite you to join our next TfS in Practice webinar.

The Five Foundational Pillars: What Determines the Future We Simulate?

Before we design a scenario, choose a modality, or convene participants, a deeper decision has already been made.

What determines the future we simulate?

In previous Dispatches, we have explored the seven Simulation-Based Intentions (SBIs) and how different lenses shape what becomes visible in simulation practice. We have also examined how intention influences safety.

This week, we step one layer deeper.

Beneath the SBIs and the 4Ds sits a quieter architecture - the ethical and strategic foundations that shape simulation before it begins.

These are the **Five Foundational Pillars of Transformative Simulation (TfS)**:

- **Purpose**
- **Perspective**
- **Power**
- **Preparation**
- **Possibility**

They are not procedural steps. They are the design conscience and values of Transformative Simulation. They shape the moment before simulation starts.

Why the Pillars Matter

Every simulation contains embedded value decisions.

- What problem is being prioritised? What insight is being surfaced?
- Who and what defines success?
- Whose perspective is centred?
- Who is invited into the room - and who is not?
- What kind of future is being rehearsed?

These decisions often remain invisible. Yet they quietly determine what becomes normalised, what becomes reinforced, and what becomes possible. The Five Pillars make those invisible choices visible. They provide a way to examine the **decision architecture** behind simulation design.

The Five Pillars

1. Purpose

Is simulation the right approach for what is needed? What change are we genuinely seeking? Unclear purpose can lead to diffusion. Over-narrow purpose can lead to reductionism. Clarity of purpose anchors design integrity.

Why are we
simulating?



What change are we
trying to create?

Purpose

Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets
Don Berwick, W. Edwards Deming, and Dr. Paul Batalden

2. Perspective

Whose lens shapes the design?

Clinician-only?

Patient voice?

Cross-sector insight?

Marginalised communities?

Perspective determines what becomes visible - and what remains hidden. Simulation can reproduce dominant narratives, or it can widen the field of vision.

Who is shaping the
design?



Whose voices are
present or missing?

Perspective

*Capturing the essence of a clinical encounter through collaboration
between all concerned*

Roger Kneebone, Sharon Weldon, Fernando Bello

3. Power

Who defines the problem? Who speaks most in the debrief? Who controls interpretation? Simulation can unintentionally reinforce hierarchy. It can also redistribute insight. Power is not an abstract concept in simulation - it is embedded in design, facilitation, framing and outputs.

What systems are we reproducing or reimagining?

What hierarchies or systems are at play?



Power

The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth - it is the truth which conceals that there is none

Jean Baudrillard

4. Preparation

What assumptions are we carrying into the room? Are we interrogating our blind spots? Are we clear about our intentions? Have we considered unintended consequences? Preparation is ethical readiness. It is the reflective work that precedes technical execution.

Are we setting the stage for authentic action and engagement?



Preparation

Every structure creates certain outcomes based on how it frames the system

Gareth Morgan

5. Possibility

What futures are we rehearsing? Are we simulating incremental adjustment? Or enabling collective imagination? Simulation is rehearsal, and rehearsal shapes expectation. Expectation shapes behaviour. Possibility determines the scale of change.

What future are we actually inviting through this simulation?



Possibility

What we pay attention to grows. We are rehearsing the future all the time

GAAdrienne Maree Brown

When Modality Leads Instead of Intention

A common drift in complex systems is subtle but important.

Instead of asking:

What are we trying to change?

We begin asking:

What can this simulator do?

This is not a critique of technology or equipment. Technology has expanded what is achievable in extraordinary ways and the array of simulation options now available is impressive. However, when modality drives design, intention can become secondary. The tool shapes the problem definition. In Transformative Simulation, modality follows intention - not the other way around. The most advanced simulation is not the most complex. It is the most intentional.

Keeping the Bridge Open

Many of these considerations resonate strongly with human factors, safety science and systems thinking traditions. The alignment between the foundational pillars and human factors principles offers significant opportunity for deeper collaboration.

Transformative Simulation is coherently aligned with these traditions - through clarity of intention, transparency of values, and deliberate design architecture.

The Layer Beneath the Framework

The SBIs describe *what simulation can be used for*.

The 4Ds decides *how simulation unfolds*.

The Five Foundational Pillars shape *why and in whose interests simulation is designed in the first place*. They operate in the moment before simulation begins. Because what we choose to simulate determines what becomes possible.

So we return to the question:

| What determines the future we simulate?

TfS in Practice: Real-World Spotlights

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

Simulation-Based Identification



Detecting Latent System Risk in Denmark

A multicentre study in Denmark of unannounced in-situ cardiac arrest simulations across four hospitals identified almost one system error per simulation, most with direct treatment consequences.

Rather than focusing on individual performance, the study revealed latent organisational, hardware and software vulnerabilities, from alarm system failures to equipment delays, many of which would not have been detected outside the real clinical environment.

 Read

more: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S266652042300053X>

Simulation-Based Involvement & Identification



Sequential Simulation of the the Parental Journey in the UK

In North West London, a community-based sequential simulation brought families and healthcare professionals together to explore

avoidable A&E attendances for children under five.

Using real parent interviews, the team designed a longitudinal simulation of a mother navigating home care, urgent care, GP services and pharmacy support. Families watched the journey unfold, then joined facilitated discussions to reflect on their own experiences.

The simulation surfaced previously unseen system pressures - language barriers, repeated storytelling, uncertainty about services - while also empowering parents to voice concerns and co-design improvements.

This is a powerful example of:

- **Simulation-Based Involvement** – bringing service users directly into the design and dialogue
- **Simulation-Based Identification** – revealing hidden pathway friction and relational gaps

 Read

more: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8936894/pdf/bmjsteli-2018-000432.pdf>

New TfS Publication

A recent *BMJ Leader* article describes how Transformative Simulation has been applied within a system-level leadership and governance context.

 Read

more <https://bmjleader.bmj.com/content/leader/early/2026/01/28/leader-2025-001408.full.pdf>

Next TfS in Practice Webinar – 24 February 2026



TfS in Practice Webinar



Guest Speaker: Rose Edwards, University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

Preparing staff, buildings, equipment and processes for service relocation using transformative simulation

Join us for our second TfS in Practice webinar, where Rose will talk about preparing staff, buildings, equipment and processes for service relocation using transformative simulation.

 **Tuesday 24 February 2026**

 **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** has launched! [Join here](#)
- Further resources available here: <https://aspih.org.uk/tfs-infographics/>

Thanks for being here. This movement is growing - and it needs your insight, curiosity, and creativity.

**#TransformativeSimulation #TfS #SimulationForChange
#SystemsChange #ASPiH**

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 **Thamer Almemony**  · 2nd
Medical Simulation Expert | Author of The World of Medical Simulati... 4d ...

Important study.
It highlights how in-situ simulation can act as a system diagnostic tool, uncovering latent organizational vulnerabilities that traditional training settings may overlook.
The link between structural factors and treatment delays is part ...more

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Transformative Simulation in action — shaping systems, culture & practice through intentional, values-based design



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