

## Escape this Emergency Room: Simulation Education During a Pandemic

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# Escape this Emergency Room: Simulation Education During a Pandemic

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## Background and Objectives

Our objective was to provide emergency medicine (EM) residents an educational activity that promotes teamwork and wellness. It would include cooperative problem solving, task-delegation, pride in team accomplishments, and recall of emergency medicine knowledge all while staying compliant with social distancing guidelines. Escape room is a game in which participants solve puzzles in order to escape a room. The game engages participants' knowledge and problem-solving while also encouraging teamwork. In professional medical education, strategies that promote active learning are in demand. Activities like escape rooms can foster wellness among the residents based on overwhelming satisfaction from participants in previous studies. Furthermore, social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic have limited the ability of residencies to gather large groups for didactics. The escape room format provides an activity that requires fewer learners at a time to be present. Its implementation can foster wellness through social interaction while staying compliant with local public health guidelines.

## Methods

EM simulation faculty devised puzzles based on a mass casualty incident. The scenario presented EM residents with multiple simulated patients. Residents identified the solutions to the puzzles as they resuscitated patients, performed procedures, identified injuries, calculated medication doses and triaged arrivals. Prior to presenting residents with a high-fidelity environment with manikins, procedural-trainers and locked-boxes, faculty piloted the scenario with low-cost elements that included envelopes, pictures and index cards. Through the piloting process, faculty defined the flow of the escape room. It also offered an alternative table top version. The completed escape room was played by 3-5 residents in a simulated resuscitation bay large enough for 5 manikins. Afterwards, residents completed a survey assessing how well the activity promoted education, teamwork and wellness.

## Results

In 2020, 19 residents divided into teams played the escape room in sequence. According to survey results, their answers were universally positive regarding the activity's promotion of education, teamwork and wellness. Respondents commonly asked for more of the same type of activity.

## Conclusion

In practice, Escape Room can be an effective social and educational tool during a pandemic.

