

# How to create ShadowBox scenarios

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**The methodology was first described and used by Neil Hintze in 2008 in the training of fire crews at the New York City Fire Department. Since then, others have further developed the concept. The method is designed to train a large number of participants without being dependent upon expert facilitators (1). SAFER has used the methodology in decision-making training prior to simulation training since 2018.**

## Important disclaimer

It must be made fundamentally clear from the start of the scenario and for those experts expressing opinions, that this is no blueprint. Experts' input is not treatment recommendation that they are responsible for. These are cognitive exercises, not clinical treatment recommendations. Focus is on cognitive processes and insight into, for example, what clinicians focus on when making decisions.

## Step 1. Target groups and learning goals

Define target group and learning goals. What do you want to achieve with the training?

## Step 2. Clinical situation

Based on a clinical situation, preferably a real scenario suitable for learning goals and target group.

## Step 3. Presentation

Use PowerPoint to create a presentation of the scenario. Using Power Point as a tool, it will be easier to present the scenario in boxes (important). Use pictures or video to illustrate situations described in the box. Present as much information as you can to reach a natural decision in the situation. Ask a couple of well formulated questions (that are linked to the learning goals) that participants can discuss together with their colleagues. When participants agree on an answer, a strategy and a decision, clinical experts present their answers on how *they* would have handled the situation. This can be done in writing (but this can quickly become tedious for participants with LOTS of text for you to deal with), or you can get experts to record a short video of 1-2 minutes. This can be done with your phone in selfie mode, or more professional videos where we use the BIGVU app (Mediafarm can help us with the user guide). The purpose is that participants get an insight into how experienced clinicians handle the situation and can compare this to their own reflections. This is how participants work through the scenario.

From experience, 4-5 boxes and 3-4 experts is enough. If we have a 5-box scenario, 4 experts and 2 minutes available for each expert opinion after each box, it would take 40 minutes to go through the expert opinions. So, some time will be taken up discussing and reflecting on each box. If participants discuss 5 minutes for each box, this will take 25 minutes and the entire scenario would then take just over 60 minutes to complete.

SAFER has developed a PowerPoint template for ShadowBox scenarios that can be used freely.

1. Klein G, Borders J. The ShadowBox approach to cognitive skills training: An empirical evaluation. *Journal of Cognitive Engineering and Decision Making*. 2016;10(3):268-80.