"How Can I Help?"

Practicing Familial Support through Simulation

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Teachers face numerous challenges in daily practice, including situations that involve the health, safety, and well-being of students and families. When harassment and physical abuse impact K–12 students, these situations pose unexpected challenges to novice teachers working to support their students (McKee & Dillenburger, 2009; Vanbergeijk, 2007). In this article, we report on a study of preservice secondary teachers' (PSTs) simulated interactions with a mother who presents evidence of physical and verbal abuse, illuminating how PSTs navigate the uncertainties and challenges of domestic violence.

To begin, we describe the concept of a clinical simulation, its origin in medical education, and its influence on teacher education. We outline our design and implementation procedures for the *Summers* simulation, where each PST interacted with an actor carefully trained to portray a timid Mrs. Summers, who is worried about her son's emerging abusive tendencies. Drawing from the resulting simulation video data, we focus our discussion and implications on the introduction of, and rehearsal within, professional uncertainty and how approximating uncertainty can foster teacher learning.

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Conceptual Frameworks

In 1963, Howard Barrows, a neurologist and medical educator, questioned how future physicians synthesized knowledge and skills into the immediate clinical reasoning they needed in daily practice with patients (Barrows & Abrahamson, 1964). Responding to the challenge of translating knowledge into practice, Barrows crafted the first clinical simulations for future physicians. In a medical simulation, a future physician interacts with a standardized patient defined as a layperson or real patient who is carefully trained to present distinct symptoms and communicate questions/concerns to multiple medical professionals in a standard, consistent manner. In simulation with a standardized patient, a physician practices diagnosing a health concern, constructing a regimen of treatment, and communicating with the patient (Barrows, 1987, 2000). Barrows's design of simulations and the use of standardized patients has become a widespread practice in the preparation of medical professionals. Today, more than 98% of U.S. medical education programs use clinical simulations either as formative learning experiences and/or as summative assessments of clinical practice (Hauer, Hodgson, Kerr, Teherani, & Irby, 2005; Islam & Zyphur, 2007). Barrows's medical simulations rest on four design tenets: *prevalence*, *clinical impact*, *social impact*, and *instructional importance*. The prevalence tenet supports the design of clinical simulations that approximate situations future professionals will often encounter, whereas the instructional importance tenet supports simulations that require professionals to enact distinct skill sets. The remaining two tenets, clinical and social impact, undergird simulations of distinct situations that will likely be experienced less often in daily practice (i.e., clinical impact) but that are of importance to students, families, or communities (i.e., social impact). It is these two design tenets, clinical and social impact, that directly support our study of how PSTs navigate the complexities of sexual harassment and physical abuse.

Sexual harassment—in the form of unwanted sexual advances, gestures, derogatory and/or sexual comments toward another, or other suggestive invitations (California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, 2007)—frequently occurs in middle and high schools (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2012). All schools should have written public policies against sexual harassment as well as specific reporting procedures set in place that include both male and female personnel trained to investigate claims (Young & Ashbaker, 2008). The presence of such policies and procedures suggests that teachers, administrators, and staff should also receive specific and ongoing training on identifying suspected cases of sexual harassment and responding appropriately. Despite these steps forward, we know that physical violence occurs in schools each day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported "828,000 nonfatal victimizations" among middle and high school students in 2010, while "approximately 7% of teachers" have indicated a physical threat, injury, or attack by a student in their schools

(CDC, 2012). Additionally, we know that violence and neglect occur in the homes of K–12 students. Each year, "1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner," with domestic violence serving as one of the strongest predictors of future abuse by young men who grow up in these abusive households (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2007).

Despite these statistics, teachers are often underprepared to recognize and report cases of abuse (McKee & Dillenburger, 2009; Vanbergeijk, 2007). Although teachers serve as mandated reporters—they are required to report any suspected abuse or neglect (Kesner & Robinson, 2002; Woika & Bowersox, 2013)—a study by Kenny (2001) found that only one-third of teachers were aware of legislated child abuse reporting procedures. Often, teacher education and in-service programs do not adequately prepare teachers to identify and report suspected cases of child abuse (Goldman & Grimbeek, 2011; Kenny, 2001; Sinanan, 2011). Thus, if teachers suspect abuse, they may feel unsure of how to navigate this difficult context with parents and students (Sela-Shayovitz, 2009). Barrows's scholarship with medical simulations focused on the synthesis of prior knowledge into immediate practice. As we consider the contexts of sexual harassment and physical abuse, and particularly the lack of preparation PSTs receive in navigating these contexts, our focus for this study is not on the synthesis of prior knowledge. Instead, our focus is on PSTs' initial, expository learning. We questioned how PSTs would navigate a simulation focused on sexual harassment and physical abuse—contexts PSTs would encounter less often through daily practice (clinical impact) but that held implications for the success and well-being of students, parents, and communities (social impact). This study centers on one research question: How do PSTs navigate a simulation centered on the contexts of sexual harassment and physical abuse?

This study builds from the recent diffusion of medical simulations to teacher education. In 2007, Dotger began a partnership with the SUNY Upstate Medical University (UMU) Clinical Skills Center. Utilizing UMU's roster of standardized patients who regularly participate in medical simulations, Dotger began retraining standardized patients to serve, instead, as standardized parents, paraprofessionals, and students. These standardized individuals (SIs) engage one-to-one with PSTs in simulation rooms that digitally record the resulting data.

Early simulations focused on general problems of practice, where PSTs navigated situations that broadly apply to school contexts, regardless of content area. For example, PSTs engaged with parents about mild student misbehavior, collaborated with a mother in support of her son with autism, and addressed the concerns of a worried father whose daughter was experiencing significant social and emotional challenges. Building from these initial simulations, Dotger and colleagues designed subject-specific simulations across the secondary (Grades 7–12) content areas. For example, one mathematics simulation challenged preservice mathematics teachers to engage with a standardized student who expresses misconceptions related to graphing and iconic interpretation (Dotger, Masingila, Bearkland, & Dotger,

2015). Within these content-specific simulations, PSTs must extend beyond their knowledge of general scholastic situations, to further synthesize knowledge of content and pedagogy as they engage with standardized students. Both general and content-specific simulations are grounded by the theory of situated cognition (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), where individual learners (i.e., PSTs) acquire and construct knowledge through in-the-moment, challenging professional experiences they experience in situ (through simulations; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

In the early diffusion of simulations from medical education to teacher education, Dotger consulted with experienced teachers (i.e., 10+ years of licensed practice) to garner topics and situations they believed PSTs should experience prior to licensure (Dotger, 2013). Their input often centered on explicit and tacit boundaries, particularly between teachers, parents, and the students they support. Specifically, experienced teachers suggested simulations that illuminate issues of harassment, violence and physical intimidation in schools, and neglect/abuse at home. Their input not only aligns with the broader national trends referenced earlier but also complements state guidelines for mandatory reporting responsibilities. Supporting novice teachers as they explore mandatory reporting responsibilities—by whom, in what situations, and in defense of whom (New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2015)—served as additional impetus for the design of the Summers simulation presented in this article.

Methodology

Simulation Design

Two documents support a clinical simulation: a Teacher Protocol and a SI Protocol. The PSTs engaging in the simulation consult the Teacher Protocol to prepare, while the actors who serve as SIs in a given simulation utilize the SI Protocol. The shared purpose of these two different protocols is to situate a PST within a simulated environment, where he or she is not scripted or directed in any way and is encouraged to engage in the simulation using his or her best professional judgment, knowledge, and skills. In contrast, the SI sitting in the same room is carefully scripted and directed to follow specific lines of discourse and response.

The Teacher Protocol for the Summers simulation provides each PST with a detailed description of the school he or she works in and of a particular student, David Summers. David is an 11th-grade student who is not performing well in class. His grades and frequent absences are far below expectations to proceed toward the next grade level. Compounding his poor academic record, David turned to one of his friends during class one morning and made a sexually explicit remark about a female student sitting nearby. The comment was graphic and grossly inappropriate, and the female student was embarrassed. As described in the Teacher Protocol, the teacher (i.e., the PST) asked David to leave the room and report to the "Time Out"

room. Noting the teacher's concern for David's academic and behavioral performances, the Teacher Protocol indicates that each teacher contacted David's mother, Angela Summers, by e-mail and requested a conference. In that brief e-mail, the teacher indicated that he or she had some concerns regarding David's academic and behavior performances.

The SI Protocol provides extensive background information for each actor portraying Angela Summers in this simulation. The background information is familial context, indicating that Angela concluded divorce proceedings with David's biological father 7 years ago and married Michael Summers 6 years ago, when David was 10 years old. The SI Protocol indicates that since that second marriage began, Angela has been subjected to repeated verbal, psychological, and physical abuse from Michael. The SI Protocol indicates that David was physically and verbally assaulted by Michael in the past, until approximately David's ninth-grade year. At that time, David was 15 years old and 180 pounds, and he was able to physically resist assaults from his stepfather. Since that time, the verbal abuse has continued, but the physical abuse of David has subsided. The unfortunate familial details in the first part of the Summers SI Protocol are necessary, helping the actors understand the gravity of the situation that Angela and David have been in for several years.

The SI Protocol requires each actor to embody the character of Angela Summers, a reserved mother who has been doing her best to weather the abuse within the family. Thus this second portion of the SI Protocol also gives contextual information on Angela's dispositions. Specifically, it outlines that Angela feels increasingly disconnected from her son, worries he might grow to be abusive/aggressive himself, is anxious about how often David is away from home, and feels guilty that their busy schedules permit only brief exchanges in the late evening hours. Furthermore, the SI Protocol indicates that Angela blames herself for the abusive environment she and David are in. These dispositional contexts are provided to help the actors envision and later embody the reticent, anxious, withdrawn, and troubled ethos that each Angela must present in simulation with each PST. Importantly, the SI Protocol also directs each actor on two important nonverbal mannerisms. First, the SI Protocol prepares each actor to sit at a 45-degree angle to, and backed away from, the conference table in each simulation room. Second, the SI Protocol directs each actor to wear a light jacket or sweater that, in simulation, she will continually clutch around her, as if drawing inward. Finally, our UMU colleagues utilized their cosmetic supplies—typically applied in medical simulations—and created a very faded, almost invisible, bruise under the right eye of each actor. Of note, this is the same side of the face that each actor turns away from each PST, while sitting at a diagonal to the conference table. Our logic in this type of bruise was twofold. We wanted to present physical evidence of past abuse, but we recognized that an individual with a very new and evident bruise might be less likely to attend a parent–teacher conference. Thus, we crafted a bruise under the right eye that authentically resembles weariness but, in simulation, represents the result of past physical abuse.

The Summers simulation is a teacher-initiated conversation, as indicated to both parties through their respective protocols. Each PST knows he or she has initiated this conversation with Mrs. Summers to discuss concerns about David, but PSTs are not directed as to how they should facilitate the conversation. When PSTs asked us for suggestions on how to approach the conversation, we encouraged PSTs to use their best professional judgment and the information presented in the Teacher Protocol. Recall that the primary purpose of a simulation is to provide an opportunity for PSTs to practice enacting their own syntheses of knowledge, skill, and disposition. Thus the Teacher Protocol intentionally withholds direction. We want to challenge PSTs to say and do what they believe to be professionally best and not to closely mimic what faculty encourage them to say or do in specific situations.

In contrast to the Teacher Protocol, the final portion of the SI Protocol outlines exact triggers that each actor must enact in simulation. Training actors to portray Angela Summers was a 1.5-hour process, conducted jointly by the second author and the director of UMU's Clinical Skills Center. The training session followed the SI Protocol verbatim, beginning with the illustration of Mrs. Summers's distant relationship with David, the abusive atmosphere she and David currently live in, and the history of past physical abuse David once suffered but no longer endures. After the background context was mastered by the actors, the second author focused the training session on triggers—exact questions, concerns, statements, and nonverbal mannerisms—that each actor portraying Mrs. Summers must enact within simulation. The Summers simulation triggers are as follows:

A. Initially sit timidly at a 45-degree angle to the conference table, saying nothing unless in response to the teacher, prompting the teacher to guide the conversation;

B. Following the teacher's likely provision of academic or behavioral data, convey a soft, reserved response of "This doesn't sound like my David";

C. Attend closely to the teacher's cues, responding to whether or not the teacher asks about "home," your "thoughts/feelings," or "how are things going?"

a. *If empathic questions/cues are issued* by the teacher, show an initial emotional response (e.g., trembling lip, watery eyes, mild/moderate crying). Offer veiled feeling statements (e.g., I've "lost touch with my son," "don't really know who he is," and that David is "just like his stepfather" (exhibiting the same sexist and abusive tendencies of his stepfather). Remark that "the process of raising David is just one more thing that I've messed up."

b. *If empathic questions/cues are not issued*, remain guarded and reserved. Do not volunteer feeling statements or emotions unless prompted by the teacher.

D. A final trigger, issuing a meek, but repetitive request (three times) for help. Ask for help in guiding your son, talking with him, advising him, getting to know him, reasoning with him, understanding him, etc.[1]

Instructional Context and Participants

The Summers simulation positions PSTs within a sobering situation, illuminating the contexts of domestic abuse and mandatory reporting responsibilities. This is a serious and demanding simulation, compounded when novice teachers have had no prior professional exposure to the context of domestic abuse. As researchers and teacher educators, we fully recognize that individuals participating in this simulation—either as SIs or PSTs—remain members of the general public. While PSTs had not received any prior professional training, it is possible that some PSTs are too familiar with physical, emotional, and verbal abuse within families. Thus, at each step in the process—designing the simulation protocols and triggers, training SIs to serve as Angela Summers, and facilitating the interactions between each PST and each Mrs. Summers—careful attention was given to particularly strong reactions from any individual.

Two cohorts of PSTs (N = 20) participated in the Summers simulation and consented to have their data analyzed and reported herein. Cohort A participated in an elective course, largely constituted around clinical simulations and the debriefing processes that accompany them. Cohort B participated in the same simulations but did so through a broader course on novice teacher development. In consideration of the order of these clinical experiences, the second author positioned the Summers simulation in the latter third of both courses. The rationale was to give PSTs opportunity to acclimate to the simulation concept, its processes, and the more moderate problems of practice presented through earlier simulations. While the Summers simulation represents a necessary educative experience for the PSTs, it should not set the tone for the broader semester by serving as the very first or last simulation.

Procedures

One week prior to the scheduled simulations, PSTs were e-mailed the Teacher Protocol. Because all PSTs had engaged in other simulations at UMU, no additional background information on the process was provided. On the day of the scheduled simulations, PSTs were divided into subgroups of three. At this time, the PSTs' login/password information was distributed, giving each PST confidential access to his or her respective simulation video data on UMU's closed-loop server. At 30-minute intervals, subgroups were situated outside of three different simulation rooms in UMU's Clinical Skills Center. Each individual PST used his or her login/password to register on a computer, activating cameras and microphones in each PST's simulation room. PSTs entered their respective simulation rooms and sat at the conference table. Then, the actors portraying Angela Summers were cued to

enter the simulation rooms from a second door in each room. At that point, with each PST situated in a simulation room with a standardized Angela Summers, the simulations began.

Data Analysis

Each simulation resulted in a video ranging in length between 7 and 18 minutes. Each video was transcribed by the first author. Working from these transcripts, both authors independently coded a 15% subset of the data, using baseline codes developed from the verbal triggers in the SI Protocol. From there, each author recorded other codes that emerged in those subsets. Afterward, the authors compared and decided on which emergent codes to include in addition to those affixed within the verbal triggers. A total of 22 were developed, resulting in the coding scheme outlined in Table 1.

Following the development of these codes, each author independently coded all 20 transcripts. Few coding disparities arose, but those that did were discussed and addressed with a decided-on single code. Although each SI presented the same verbal triggers, the PSTs' responses were different in approach and content. Therefore, to organize the data and get a clear picture of the PSTs' responses, the coded conversations were collapsed into the broader themes detailed in the following.

Findings

Tone and Approach

In this simulation, each PST initiated a meeting with Mrs. Summers to discuss David's academic and behavioral issues. In conversation with Mrs. Summers, PSTs used a variety of approaches to begin the meeting and present information. Some took a direct and straightforward approach by immediately recounting David's verbalizations toward the female student in class. Other PSTs took a softer approach by expressing general concern about David, indicating worry for him "falling behind" and their desire to "see him graduate." Other PSTs expressed concern about his "well-being" and "safety" and that they wanted to see him live a "healthy lifestyle."

A Softer Approach: Questions and Compliments

Of the PSTs who took a softer approach in expressing their concerns, at least half began with a question or compliment that lightened the tone of the meeting. Common questions centered on Mrs. Summers's general well-being (e.g., "How are you today?") as well as inquiries into why this meeting had been initiated (e.g., "Do you have any idea why I asked you to come in for a meeting?"). One PST chose a more focused question, "How are things at home?" in what can be presumed to have been an effort to gather information about David. Half of all PSTs began the meeting

by complimenting Mrs. Summers on her interest and involvement in her son's life in school. In similar fashion, a few PSTs complimented David directly as a positive effort to break the ice with Mrs. Summers and transition toward their concern and description of David's actions in class. Several referred to David as a "great kid" with "a lot of potential," and others made specific reference to his energy and the desire to see him "harness that energy" in his classwork and positive behavior.

Straight to the Point

Some PSTs, like Brooke, took a more straightforward approach when begin-

Table 1
Codes and Descriptions for Summers Simulation

Code	Description
T1	Summers sits reservedly—prompting teacher to take the lead
T2	"This doesn't sound like my David"
T3-A	Summers reserved emotional response (i.e., trembling lip, watery eyes, mild/moderate crying) "lost touch with David," "don't really know who he is," and that David is "just like his stepfather"; "the process of raising David is just one more thing that I've messed up"
T3-B	If teacher does not ask about feelings, remain guarded and reserved
T4	Meak, but repetitive plea for help
EMP	Empathy
AGR	Agreement
CONC	Concern
COMPL	Compliment
DAV	David
SUGG	Asks mother for suggestions on how to help David
Data-ACA	Data-Academic
Data-BHVR	Data-Behavior
PL	Plan of action
COM	Communication
CONF	Conference in the future with Mrs. Summers and David
SERV	Services that the school offers
JUDG	Judgment
LECTURE	Teacher lectures Mrs. Summers
AFF	Self-affirmation from teacher
NTS	Notes
Q	Question—to gather more information
OUT	Outlier
INTRO	Introduction
WC	Word choice used by teacher
ID	Identity
AWK	Awkward

ning the conversation with Mrs. Summers. Their approaches centered on citing data/information toward the very beginning of the meeting and, frequently, using direct language in their descriptions of David:

> Uh, I just wanted to call you today because of David's academic performance right now as well as some behavioral issues I've been having in class. Um, he is very disruptive often and he hasn't been handing in his homework. (Brooke)

In addition to describing David as disruptive, D'Angelo referred to David's academic and behavioral issues as "glaring problems," while Whistler immediately explained that there was a "sexual harassment issue with David last week." Silverton dually expressed concern but also optimism that David's academics and behavior would improve:

> So, basically I called you in for some concerns that I have . . . he just has [pause] no respect for authority, for any adult figures at all, and that's . . . that's like really disheartening, it really is, 'cause I mean he has potential to be a great student, I know he can do it, I believe in all of my students, but he's just not performing that way right now.

Silverton points out David's behavior issues directly and then softens his concerned tone by indicating that David is not "performing . . . right now," leaving the door open for possible improvement in the future.

"Can I Say That to a Parent?"

PSTs employed different approaches to recounting for Mrs. Summers what David said in class toward the female student. Some provided a direct account of the words spoken by David, while others clouded their description. Many hesitated in explaining the incident, stumbling over words or offering awkward silences that suggested discomfort in reporting the information. Three PSTs did not address the incident at all. Out of 20 PSTs, 11 described the incident as "incredibly inappropriate" or explained that David said a "very obscene comment that contained the 'F-word.'" Others said that David expressed his intent to have "sexual relations" with the female student, and some referred to David as making a "rude" or "disrespectful" comment. One PST provided a detailed description of the incident and referred to it as "sexual harassment." A few PSTs only gave David's direct quote when prompted by Mrs. Summers's specific question about what her son had said to the young woman. One PST, Emory, provided the direct quote without prompt from Mrs. Summers:

> This past Friday morning, uh David was sitting in class and this young lady walked in tardy and sat down at her desk. Uh he made a very vulgar comment to her, um please excuse I have to tell you, uh I have to tell you explicitly what he said, um, uh-uh I don't like to repeat it but, uh he said to his friends loud enough for the whole class to hear, "Damn I'd love to ——."[2]

PSTs' Reactions to Mrs. Summers

Recall that Mrs. Summers's reactions to the data/information presented by PSTs were carefully directed by the SI Protocol, but PSTs were not in any way directed or scripted. As described in the SI Protocol, Mrs. Summers reacted with emotion on learning of her son's outburst in class. Responding to Mrs. Summers, some PSTs utilized empathy and understanding; others showed judgment, gave unsolicited advice, or posed questions to gather more information on David's home life.

Empathy and Understanding

While the majority of PSTs showed concern for David and conveyed that they were "worried" about him, many also expressed empathy toward and understanding of Mrs. Summers's perspectives and emotions. For example, PSTs exhibited empathy by providing tissues, verbally acknowledging her tears, and, in one simulation, offering Mrs. Summers a hug. Silverton's words exemplify PSTs' most common response pattern: "But you can't blame yourself for this, I'm sure you're doing the best you can." Similarly, Parker tried to console Mrs. Summers, saying, "It's nothing that you did wrong or anything as a parent so please don't feel guilty." Mancini displayed understanding in an effort to relate to David's assumed mind-set about school:

> Um, you know he might just be at the age where he really just wants out of school completely. I mean, I remember I felt like that at one point too. You know, you feel like you're never going to get out.

Gregory expressed understanding by listening to Mrs. Summers's concern that her son may not go on to college. He responded by stating that while David may not pursue college, "there are trade schools and many things he could go on to do with a GED."

"Change of Tone"

For the PSTs whose approach was initially straightforward, they universally adopted a softer tone in response to Mrs. Summers's emotional statement, "That doesn't sound like my son." Some PSTs directed the power and expertise back to Mrs. Summers, showing that they trusted her knowledge of her son. For example, Silverton said, "You're saying that doesn't sound like him and I'm, I, I'm willing to take your word for that because you're his parent and you would know." Others responded by shifting toward an empathic tone, noting the difficulty of working two jobs and raising David at the same time. Whistler responded in agreement when Mrs. Summers said those actions did not sound like her son: "Not at all . . . uh, yeah, it's always something surprising when a kid acts like that." Perhaps the most noteworthy response to Mrs. Summers's emotion, though, was an effort to downplay David's actions. One PST (Thompson) enthusiastically said, "Right. I, I

don't think it was anything to upset the girl, you know I don't . . . I don't think that he was trying to upset her it seemed more . . ."

Information and Boundaries

When Mrs. Summers expressed disbelief about David's academics and behavior, several PSTs began gathering more information about his past performance. Some inquired about his previous academic record in school and asked how much or how little trouble he had experienced in school. Others asked questions focused on David's home life, using general inquiries like, "Is there anything going on at home that I should know about, anything outside [*pause*] of the school that might be affecting his behavior?" This type of question represents a key point in the SI training session. If PSTs inquired at all about home, each SI representing Mrs. Summers was trained to issue several triggers related to her anxieties about David and her fear that he is exhibiting abusive tendencies similar to his stepfather's:

> I just [*pause*] want my-my son to you know, be respectful. I don't want him to be like his stepfather. Um [*pause*] in the past he . . . he . . . he . . . he . . . he can, in the past he used to . . . to rough [*pause*] David up a bit um, but you know, David has . . . has grown and so, it kind of, I guess become equals or something, but he . . . he leaves David alone.

Statements like the preceding from Mrs. Summers caused some PSTs to further interrogate, questioning whether the stepfather is physically abusive toward either David or her. Per her SI training, Mrs. Summers says, "I mean I don't . . . I don't [*pause*] he doesn't, he doesn't really hit me you know he doesn't physically, he just pushed me a little bit and I . . . I fell into a cabinet [*pause*] um."

One PST (Cramer) responded in very direct fashion to this information, asking when her husband last pushed her. Like Cramer, other PSTs responded to Mrs. Summers's trigger with communications that illuminate professional boundaries between home and school. One PST responded with forceful urgency, providing unsolicited advice about what Mrs. Summers needed to do to keep David and herself safe:

> Well if it's unsafe for you then [*pause*] you and David [*pause*] I strongly . . . strongly . . . strongly recommend that you find, if or do you have family in the area? Friends? Anybody you could stay with? . . . The most important thing that happens is that we keep . . . we keep David and we keep you safe, and away from your husband.

Similarly, two other PSTs (Emory and Benitez) encouraged Mrs. Summers to leave her husband and "get out of the situation." Benitez took a judgmental approach, questioning Mrs. Summers's reasons for staying with someone who is abusive: "I don't know why someone like you, someone so nice and respectful would want to be with someone who [*pause*] who hurts you." A fourth PST transitioned from providing unsolicited advice to suggesting specific action steps and outlets for physical safety:

There are places where you and David can go where he won't be able to find you. He may not be hurting David [*pause*] physically, but he is emotionally and verbally abusing him and it's gotten physical with you that is [*pause*] for your safety and David's safety and the safety of David's girlfriend, I think it would be best for you guys to find a shelter or stay with a friend, or do anything to take yourself out of that situation.

Other PSTs also experienced Mrs. Summers's trigger but did not engage in further discussion. These PSTs either explained to Mrs. Summers that although the meeting began as "confidential," they were legally mandated to report abuse, or they came up with a plan to help David both in and out of school, offering the support of the school counselor or psychologist.

"Enlisting Other Personnel"

Responding to information Mrs. Summers shared in conversation, four PSTs employed a "school policy" approach to mandatory reporting of abuse. Each PST who referenced a mandatory reporting policy also emphasized his or her obligation to report any cases of abuse or compromised safety. D'Angelo offered an explanation:

OK. What I have to do in cases like this, and this has to be reported to the school and also to the police. Um, because this is a matter of safety. If it were just David's academic issues this would be strictly confidential, but because it is involving other forces that have harmed you and harmed David, we need to intervene.

While 4 PSTs referenced mandatory reporting procedures, 10 PSTs recommended the support of school counselors to help David improve his behavior and academics. This suggestion was offered in a variety of ways. Some PSTs asked if Mrs. Summers had ever sought outside counseling or if she had ever thought of speaking to a counselor. Several PSTs asked if David had spoken with a counselor in the past, would be interested in doing so now, or might attend counseling with the teacher and Mrs. Summers to get issues "out in the open." Gregory approached this topic through a different, established school structure that supports students whose parents are divorced:

We do have the option, we have a school counselor you know they, they call it banana split or whatever, to sit down with these kids who . . . whose parents are either split up or you know going through tough times because it does, it affects the kids and especially when another person is brought in sometimes not every person you know adapts to it.

Plan of Action: Shared Versus Individual Responsibility

As the conversations progressed, PSTs addressed next steps or plans of action to help David improve academically and behaviorally. Three different approaches emerged, differentiated by who would assume responsibility for guiding David.

Several PSTs offered to work with David. Through their offers, two PSTs asked Mrs. Summers if she had any specific suggestions of approaches they might use to help him in school:

> Is there anything I can do to [*pause*] you know, help in the situation because I . . . I'm really willing to go up there for him cause I . . . I really want all my students to succeed. (Silverton)

> I wanted to know if you have been noticing any of the same things at home or if you have any suggestions of things I could try to um reach out to him or uh help him do better in school or . . . (Mancini)

Some PSTs offered to stay after school or work with David during lunch to help him make up missed assignments. Other PSTs placed the responsibility of talking to and working with David solely on Mrs. Summers and the home environment:

> Uh, but maybe just [*pause*] say something to him see if you can make an impact um [*pause*] he really needs you to be there for him. (Collaggio)

> I know that it's very hard for you working two jobs but do you think there is any time available that you could sit down and talk to him maybe on the weekends or . . . ? (Cramer)

The majority of PSTs, though, recommended working collaboratively—at home and school—to find supportive solutions. Once again, PSTs utilized compliments to acknowledge Mrs. Summers as a collaborative partner:

> And you're . . . you seem to be like a really positive force on his life outside, I mean you want him to do well, we want him to do well, we'll just try and problem solve solutions. (Gregory)

Discussions about who would work to support David naturally and quickly transitioned to concluding dialogue about a plan of action. However, a few PSTs concluded their conversations with Mrs. Summers with questions about her well-being. In these instances, Mrs. Summers still presented as visibly upset, overwhelmed, and inwardly drawn.

Discussion and Implications

This study situated PSTs in a one-to-one conference with a standardized mother whose son recently made verbally abusive and sexually explicit remarks in class. We sought to examine how PSTs would engage with what David said in class, particularly as evidence of child and spousal abuse emerged within a parent–teacher interaction. PSTs in this study had no prior training in the challenging contexts of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, or mandatory reporting. Thus our discussion and implications center on the introduction of and rehearsal within uncertainties—like domestic violence and sexual harassment—to foster teacher learning and dispositional development.

Our first point of discussion—and accompanying implication—focuses on the introduction of uncertainties in PST preparation. By design, the Summers simulation presented PSTs two related challenges: David, who made an egregious verbal remark in class, and his mother, who expressed significant personal and familial concerns in conference. The combination of these two challenging contexts—a grossly inappropriate comment from David and a very unacceptable home environment presented by Mrs. Summers—situated PSTs in an uncertain professional context. Hargreaves's (1998, 2001) scholarship on emotional geographies emphasizes very specific types of professional terrain that teachers encounter. In the Summers simulation, PSTs encounter Hargreaves's *moral geography*, as they must consider different perspectives on what is best for David and his mother. PSTs also encounter Hargreaves's *professional geography*, as they navigate boundaries between home and school, speaking to David's actions in school and determining how to respond to what Mrs. Summers and David experience at home.

States and school districts have mandatory reporting expectations for a very unfortunate reason. As PSTs transition into their induction years of teaching, they will encounter—and will need to professionally navigate—the emotional geographies illuminated by the Summers simulation. In their induction years of service, novice teachers will encounter situations where they must determine what is "best" for a student and how they will navigate and bridge boundaries between school and home. Consider the often-cited gap between preparation and practice (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Education scholars (e.g., Fuller, 1969; Hargreaves, 1998, 2001) and their studies of novice teachers (e.g., Flores & Day, 2006) reference the many new uncertainties novice teachers experience in their early years of teaching. Thus one implication of this study is for teacher educators to systematically reduce the number of unknowns. Recognizing that no preparatory environment will account for all future uncertainty, we suggest intentionally situating PSTs within multiple, uncertain learning experiences, challenging PSTs to engage within situations that represent the uncertainties they will later encounter in licensed practice.

Our second point of discussion—and accompanying implication—extends beyond the introduction of uncertainty to focus on PSTs' varied approaches to the uncertainties within the Summers simulation. Data from this study provide evidence of PSTs empathic and boundary-spanning communications, approaches that hold promise and require fine-tuning. When Mrs. Summers showed emotion, some PSTs expressed empathy, understanding, and even the willingness to give a hug. For other PSTs who began the conference in a straightforward manner, the emerging emotions softened their stances. In calculating solutions to the situation Mrs. Summers described, a few PSTs suggested that Mrs. Summers remove herself and David from the physically and verbally abusive situation. In contrast, other PSTs provided no suggestions for Mrs. Summers and instead repeatedly asked her for suggestions on how they could support David in class. Across every coded category of data we report, the uncertainties of the simulated situation yielded a variety of

PSTs' approaches, from an empathic "do you need a hug?" to a declarative "find a shelter." These data are not surprising. The range of PSTs' responses—within their small cohorts—does suggest that PSTs need additional practice within situations that involve the well-being of their students.

Recent attention to practice-based teacher education (Zeichner, 2013) has emphasized the rehearsal (Grossman et al., 2009) of discrete teaching practices (e.g., collaborating with a colleague, leading a student group discussion, engaging in a problem-solving conversation with a parent or caregiver; Ball & Forzani, 2009). Rehearsing specific teaching practices requires one to interact—beyond traditional rote reading and reflections about teaching—and engage with the professional context at hand. Piaget's (1959) scholarship helps us understand the role of disequilibration novice teachers will experience by rehearsing in a new professional context. Importantly, that cognitive uncertainty drives one to gather new information and construct meaning by forging new schemata. Rehearsing, or practicing, within uncertain situations allows novice teachers to employ new or amended schemata and to make adjustments in professional actions and judgments.

Recounting David's crude comment is disequilibrating, but when compounded by his mother's accounts of physical and verbal abuse in the home, it is understandable why several PSTs emerged from the Summers simulation exclaiming, "I'm not sure if I did that right!" and "Did I do OK in there?" When their simulations concluded, most PSTs sought immediate feedback. They also verbalized both dread and eagerness when we prompted them to look at the video data to gain perspective on their performances. To close this point of discussion, we highlight the key distinction between our first and second implications. Our first implication suggests an introduction to a wide variety of professional uncertainties. However, our second implication distinguishes simulations and other "approximations of practice" (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2076) from traditional approaches to clinical practice (e.g., observation, tutoring, student teaching field practica; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Putnam & Borko, 2000). In traditional classroom settings, when preservice or novice teachers engage in distinct situations, they do not typically have video data of that engagement. They do not typically have multiple peers who experienced the same situation, and professional circumstances rarely align in such a manner to allow the novice to engage in that situation again. However, carefully designed approximations of practice, like the simulation described herein, expose multiple PSTs to the same professional challenge and support an environment for data-informed rehearsal within the specific challenge. There is no one right way to engage with Mrs. Summers, but rehearsal, data review, and subsequent discussion of PSTs' varied approaches will result in the development of new, and the amendment of established, schemata for action in crisis. Through action (in simulation) and careful reflection (using simulation video data), rehearsal with teaching practices can support novice teacher learning.

Our final point of discussion and resulting implication focuses on the method

employed in this study and its potential impact on teacher dispositional development. To begin, consider disposition as a "trend of a teacher's judgment or actions in ill-structured contexts" (Johnson & Reiman, 2007, p. 677). The professional uncertainties we discussed earlier equate to ill-structured contexts; there are multiple ways to approach and support a concerned parent or struggling student. Rehearsing within ill-structured professional contexts, though, allows a novice teacher to develop more sophisticated professional schemata (Reiman & Peace, 2002) and practice the enactment of those schemata. Our final implication is predicated on the previous two: If we introduce PSTs to professional uncertainties, and if we encourage them to rehearse with these uncertainties prior to licensure, then we also have an opportunity to examine PSTs' dispositional trends.

Looking at the data in this study, teacher educators can appropriately ask how to encourage PSTs to recognize abusive situations, judge them to be harmful, and take appropriate action in the moment. Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, and Thoma (1999) asked this same type of question in the broader context of moral development, scrutinizing how educators help students recognize an unethical situation, judge the situation as unjust, and then take action to right the wrong. Scholars' studies of dispositional growth within professional contexts (e.g., Diez, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Reiman & Peace, 2002) have emphasized their developmental nature. Building from their assertions that dispositions become more principled and fine-tuned over time and through experience, it is premature to gauge PSTs' identity and disposition based on their performances in the Summers simulation. However, building from the Summers data and examining PSTs' practices across multiple simulations, we can begin considering how those practices do or do not develop toward ethical dispositions that support students and families in crisis. Aligned with Reiman and Peace (2002), we propose that the development of professional dispositions—of trends in professional action and judgment—requires deliberate practice and thus holds implications for how teacher educators support preservice and induction-stage teacher learning. Rather than chance the development of novice teacher identity and disposition to idiosyncratic experiences that may, or may not, be mediated by thoughtful mentors, our final implication emphasizes approximations of practice across a variety of teacher learning models. When multiple approximations of practice are deliberately sequenced within teacher learning models, and are supported with a careful review of data, they can further illuminate for teacher educators potential trends in PSTs' approaches, actions, or decisions.

Earlier we noted the prevalence of violent and abusive situations that impact K–12 students, requiring teachers to engage and act to protect student well-being. To practice taking action, we suggest PSTs be exposed to—and have opportunities to rehearse within—professional uncertainties. Furthermore, we suggest PSTs and teacher educators dually examine data for evidence of dispositional development across multiple approximations of practice. This study provides data from PSTs' exposure to and rehearsal within the uncertainties of an abusive domestic context.

We consider this study to be an initial expository effort, because PSTs had no prior professional training with this challenging context. Other studies might consider PSTs' interactions within traditional mandatory reporting training sessions juxtaposed with PSTs' interactions within the Summers simulation. Such studies would help illuminate if and how in situ practice through simulations advances teacher learning. Similarly, the Summers simulation, and our study of PSTs' actions and decisions therein, is intentionally focused on one familial context. Future research might sequence the Summers simulation alongside other simulations that offer very distinct professional challenges. Such a design would allow scholars to measure novice teachers' potential development of moral/ethical dispositions, contrasting the potential dispositional growth of PSTs enrolled in traditional teacher learning environments with that of PSTs enrolled in a series of clinical simulations.

We recognize that there is no way to prepare PSTs for every challenging situation they will encounter. In his design of medical simulations, Barrows recognized this reality as well. Thus his design tenets call for very intentional simulations that help support the broader preparation of the professional. The Summers simulation reflects Barrows's clinical and social impact tenets. In licensed practice, novices are unlikely to regularly encounter situations like those that David and his mother present (clinical impact), but their infrequency does not reduce the importance of the situation or the requirement that novice teachers engage to support students and families in crisis (social impact). We are under no illusion that the Summers simulation has "prepared" the PSTs in this study to comprehensively navigate the challenges of abuse and domestic violence. Instead, we suggest this simulation served an expository role. Having engaged with Mrs. Summers, we hypothesize that the PSTs in this study now have early "abuse/neglect" and "mandatory reporting" schemata they can enact later, in similar situations. Employing clinical simulations—as a core pedagogy in teacher education (Dotger, 2015) or a methodology to examine novice teacher learning—supports novice teachers' initial exposure to and rehearsal within the geographies of K–12 teaching.

Note

[1] Interested researchers/teacher educators may obtain the *Summers* simulation protocols directly from the second author, without fee or licensure obligation, via e-mail communication. In addition, the second author will support simulation training and implementation efforts via video conference.

[2] The actual onscenity has been redacted by the authors but was not by the PST in simulation.

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