

**Submission Id:** 4039

**Title**

*Assessing the Intersection of Virtual Meetings and Relational Leadership Tools in Healthcare and Interprofessional Settings:*

**Priority 1 (Research Category)**

Qualitative research

**Presenters**

Cirila Estela Vasquez Guzman, Leah Gordon, MPH, Samuel Edwards, MD, MPH, Anais Tuepker, PhD, Brian Park, MD, MPH, Alexander Mansour, MPH

**Abstract**

Context: Creating strong interprofessional teams through relational practices can enhance inclusion and belonging of healthcare team members. The Relational Leadership Institute (RLI) has provided training to this end since 2017. However, the rapid transition to virtual meetings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged healthcare teams' ability to engage in relational team building.

Objective: We sought to understand how relational leadership skills and tools were being utilized in virtual meetings by the Relational Leadership Community, with an emphasis on the intersection with more equitable and inclusive team spaces, and power dynamics in virtual spaces.

Design: Semi-structured interviews (60-90 minutes in length) with key stakeholders were conducted in 2021. Transcripts analyzed using an iterative, team-based immersion/crystallization approach.

Setting or Dataset: RLI is an 11-session training focused on tools that cultivate a more human-centered and equity promoting healthcare system.

Population Studies: Three groups including members from RLI program alumni, the RLI Leadership Pathway (RLI alumni who become course facilitators), Intend Health (co-creators of the RLI curriculum) and National Collaborative Partners (University of Utah and UNC involved with RLI).

Results: Nine were interviewed about their virtual meeting transition experiences. Our analysis found that relational leadership is becoming even more critical for fostering inclusion with the rise of virtual meetings. Significant changes were described in virtual meetings settings that captured elements of formal and informal structures. Three tools were identified as enhancing equity: 1) norms grounded in values create the container of engagement, 2), storytelling of our diverse lived expertise facilitate meaningful interactions and 3) executing check-ins foster positive opportunities for team members to practice vulnerability and transparency outside of having a formal agenda.

Conclusion: Virtual spaces create new opportunities as well as challenges for relational leadership, yet overall relational practices were described as potentially powerful tools for greater equity on teams and re-humanization of diverse teams. In current times when teams are dealing with high levels of stress and uncertainty, it is critical for interprofessional teams to utilize relational tools that foster collaboration and connection for all during virtual meetings.