

Are all your meetings suddenly virtual? Here are 6 ways to make them effective.

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As the new coronavirus rapidly spreads across the United States, clinical leaders across the country face a myriad of new challenges, including remote work.

Telework is surging amid coronavirus—here's how to do it right

While public health officials have encouraged the public to practice social distancing, the White House doubled down on that message by **recommending** all employees work remotely if possible and limit in-person gathering to 10 people or less.

For many clinical leadership teams, this means transitioning from in-person to virtual meetings to achieve consensus on critical decisions about how their organizations will respond to a surge of COVID-19 patients.

Below, we've pulled together tips you can use to make your virtual meetings just as impactful as your in-person meetings.

6 tips for an effective remote meeting

1. Raise the threshold for meetings. With the hourly updates on COVID-19, it's likely that your priorities are shifting rapidly each day. Take a moment to look at the meeting invites on your calendar, both standing and new additions. Ask yourself if they're all necessary to achieve your immediate goals and delay or cancel those that don't meet that threshold.
2. Review and streamline the attendee list. Phone meetings can be inefficient if too many people are on the line, but they're equally unproductive if key decision makers aren't present. If the goal of your meeting is to discuss options and quickly make a decision, consider reducing the number of attendees by assigning a representative from impacted groups. Then, task leaders with sharing the information with their broader teams in follow-up.
3. Share an agenda in advance, even if it's just the meeting's primary goal. Phone meetings can be difficult to manage in the moment because it's impossible to read non-verbal cues. To make

sure everyone is on the same page, share an agenda in advance and underscore the purpose of the meeting before diving in. If everyone knows what they're working towards before the meeting, they're more likely to hit the ground running and keep the conversation on track.

4. Assign a moderator to manage discussion. Phone meetings can feel awkward because attendees may not be sure when—or how—to jump in during the meeting, which leads to crosstalk or complete silence. The moderator's role is to keep the conversation focused on the goal, and make sure everyone has a chance to participate. Best practice phone facilitation tips are to: leave longer than comfortable pauses to allow space for people to speak up; call on people to make sure everyone has a chance to weigh in; and encourage people to verbalize their non-verbal responses such as saying, "Yes, I agree" instead of nodding along.
5. Start with a rapid round of introductions. Baking in time for introductions ensures the group knows who is on the line and allows space for the socializing that would otherwise happen as colleagues walk into or out of a meeting. While you may be reluctant to dedicate valuable time to intros, those two to five minutes can pay off in the long run and help your meeting run more efficiently. It gives attendees a moment to "wash off" their last meeting and allows for much needed humor or conversation that can relieve anxiety and boost engagement during a trying time.
6. Reserve 10 minutes at the end to recap and review next steps. We know you and your teams are busier than ever, and it's easy to finish one meeting and dial immediately into the next one. But before closing the line, make sure each next step has an assigned owner and deadline to keep the momentum going. Then, have the moderator shoot an e-mail to the group directly following the meeting so everyone's on the same page. If your virtual platform has screen sharing capabilities, consider updating a document live with takeaways and next steps so everyone sees the final output in real time.

For many clinical leaders, efficiently collaborating via remote meetings will be one of the many new challenges they face amid the new coronavirus outbreak. As you navigate the transition, remember, be patient—with technology and with each other.