Tips for Success: Virtual Learning Sessions and Webinars

The popularity of virtual meetings requires a big shift in the approach you take to Learning Sessions, but a high quality experience can certainly take place. It is important that teams consider attendance at and participation in the virtual sessions just as important as the face to face, but they will find it more challenging in a variety of ways:

Teams will be "attending" the session usually from their own facility, with a tendency to be **distracted** by "emergencies", questions, refill needs, etc. Use the "50 mile rule"…let everyone at the facility know that they should not interrupt you for anything that they would not try to reach you for if you were 50 miles away. They can be made aware of your scheduled times for breaks and lunch and get any questions that need to be addressed quickly to you at those times. Emergencies are a different story of course.

Teams may tend to pick and choose sessions for a virtual learning session, instead of attending every session as you would at a face-to-face session. Encourage leaders and sponsors, particularly, to attend. The virtual session is just as important as the face to face, your ideas, experience, and questions at the sessions are crucial. "Attention is the currency of leadership"

When there are multiple breakout sessions going on simultaneously, teams will need to **create a plan** for the location of the computer and screen and connection for each of those sessions. Plan ahead. Create a DRAFT agenda with a space for the location of each session to be indicated.

Prepare **handouts** of the slides and post them to the internet shared site, so that attendees can print them prior to the day of the session. **Worksheets** for the team huddles are especially important. Send an updated list of all documents prepared for each session.

Have a **computer** available for the team meetings, you will find it helpful to prepare the documents that need to be submitted to the Extranet by the end of the session, day, or learning session.

Interaction is the word of the day, but sometimes with virtual meetings it is difficult to "see" the response of the audience, understand when they might have a question, etc. Teams should be encouraged to jot questions or comments into the chat for review, participate in polls and respond when asked, and help by adding experiences, challenges, etc.

Distractions are easy to find in the virtual world. Encourage teams to turn cell phones and Blackberry off for the sessions. They will find it easier to stay focused and participate and they sometimes cause interference with the shared line.

Different **modalities work for different settings**
Virtual methods (webinar, phone, or social networking platforms) are effective for teaching specific and sequential content. Example: Teaching a practice site how to use an interactive excel spreadsheet that auto-calculates panel size based on practice demographics. It's 'how to' content.

Case studies can also be effectively shared over the phone or via a webinar.

Virtual methods are also effective for addressing basic Q&A for small- to medium-sized groups, and providing access to tools (email and websites are particularly helpful tools).

But what doesn't work so well? Teaching complex or interconnected content is more challenging; for example, the importance of engaged leadership, or how team-based care can change the culture and flow of a clinic and lead to improvements in access and care coordination.

In-Person Meetings
Providing motivation for change/inspiration and sharing ideas on changing practice culture are also best conducted face-to-face.

It works better for teams that are receiving content/education/support to meet face-to-face. It's tempting to think that practice teams will sit together in a break room at their clinic and listen to a webinar, discuss it, and create an action plan immediately after, but this tends not to happen without direction and facilitation,

(two types of support that are easier to provide at in-person events.) At in-person events you control the learning environment, but on webinars, attendees are more likely to get distracted by competing priorities.

If your PF program has limited resources, invest in in-person events up-front (to maximize the opportunity to build relationships), and use them for content and activities that are difficult to accomplish using virtual methods – inspiration, personal connections, discussion groups, action planning, and the like.

Be thoughtful about your audience's ability to engage with virtual methods. Many clinic staff do not have ready access to a personal computer, so regular email exchanges and social networking may be particularly challenging.

Conversely, if you are serving practice sites that are spread over a wide geographic area, sites in remote areas, or sites with difficult weather, virtual methods may be more attractive and feasible, because travel is burdensome.