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ENHANCING WORKPLACE CONNECTION AND REDUCING ISOLATION AMONG REMOTE EMPLOYEES

Abstract

Remote work has expanded organizational flexibility while weakening informal interactions that sustain trust and team cohesion. When task performance remains stable but connectedness declines, organizations often default to technological solutions that prove ultimately inadequate. This study reframes workplace isolation as a relational condition rather than a platform deficiency. Conducted within a fully remote unit of a U.S.-based disability insurance organization, this action-focused, intervention-based study observed a small remote team to understand how structured yet informal virtual touchpoints influenced perceived connectedness over time. Grounded in social exchange theory, the Connectedness Initiative embedded repeatable, low-cost relational practices into routine workflows. Data from session observations, interviews, and field notes revealed a three-phase developmental progression from isolation to engagement: hesitation and norm testing, facilitated engagement, and relational depth. Findings identify five practical levers for successful remote engagement: leadership visibility, psychological safety, visual engagement, agenda-free interaction, and structural flexibility. Implementing these five levers strengthened reciprocal engagement in a distributed team. By bridging established scholarship with operational design, this study offers an actionable framework for organizations seeking sustainable connections in remote and hybrid environments.

Keywords: remote work, workplace isolation, employee connectedness, virtual engagement, leadership modeling, qualitative action research

Author Information

Dr. Denisa Gjiriti is a scholar-practitioner specializing in organizational leadership, systems improvement, and human-centered organizational development. She serves as a Senior Billing Experience Consultant at Unum Insurance, Massachusetts, where she leads process improvement initiatives, facilitates cross-functional collaboration, and supports operational learning across complex systems. She holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Capella University, with additional graduate study in clinical psychology from Albanian University and degrees in management and business administration from Worcester State University and Quinsigamond Community College. Her work integrates leadership theory, organizational learning, and applied practice, with interests in psychological safety, leadership visibility, and social connectedness in contemporary workplaces. denisagjiriti@yahoo.com

Introduction

Remote work has transformed how organizations structure collaboration, manage performance, and sustain interpersonal connections (Yasmin & Tanaka, 2022). Although distributed arrangements expand flexibility and access to talent, they also disrupt informal relational exchanges that traditionally reinforce trust, reciprocity, and team cohesion (Haque, 2023). Workplace isolation in remote settings should be viewed as a relational condition characterized by reduced interaction, diminished emotional visibility, and weakened social cues, rather than a result of technological shortcomings (Figueiredo et al., 2025). System-based workplaces depend on coordination, discretionary effort, and relationship-based work. Thus, persistent isolation without intentional bridging can erode communication quality, attenuate trust, and undermine system loops and feedback. Social exchange theory provides a useful lens for understanding these dynamics, suggesting that weakened reciprocal patterns will undermine relationship-building, ultimately affecting performance and team efforts (Emerson, 1976).

In 2025, a fully remote unit within a U.S.-based disability insurance organization exhibited indicators of declining connectedness. In response, a structured yet informal relational intervention, the Connectedness Initiative (CI), was implemented as part of an action research project, yielding a three-phase developmental model. Grounded in social exchange theory, the CI emphasized repeated relational interaction, visible leadership modeling, and low-barrier engagement practices designed to activate reciprocal norms in a virtual environment. This study explored

participants’ experiences across the implementation period. The three-phase relational progression – hesitation and norm testing, facilitated engagement, and relational depth – emerged during (not necessarily *from*) the intervention (causation was not tested or examined). By situating these phases within the social exchange framework, the article provides applied insight into how intentional relational design can influence perceived connectedness in distributed, virtual work systems.

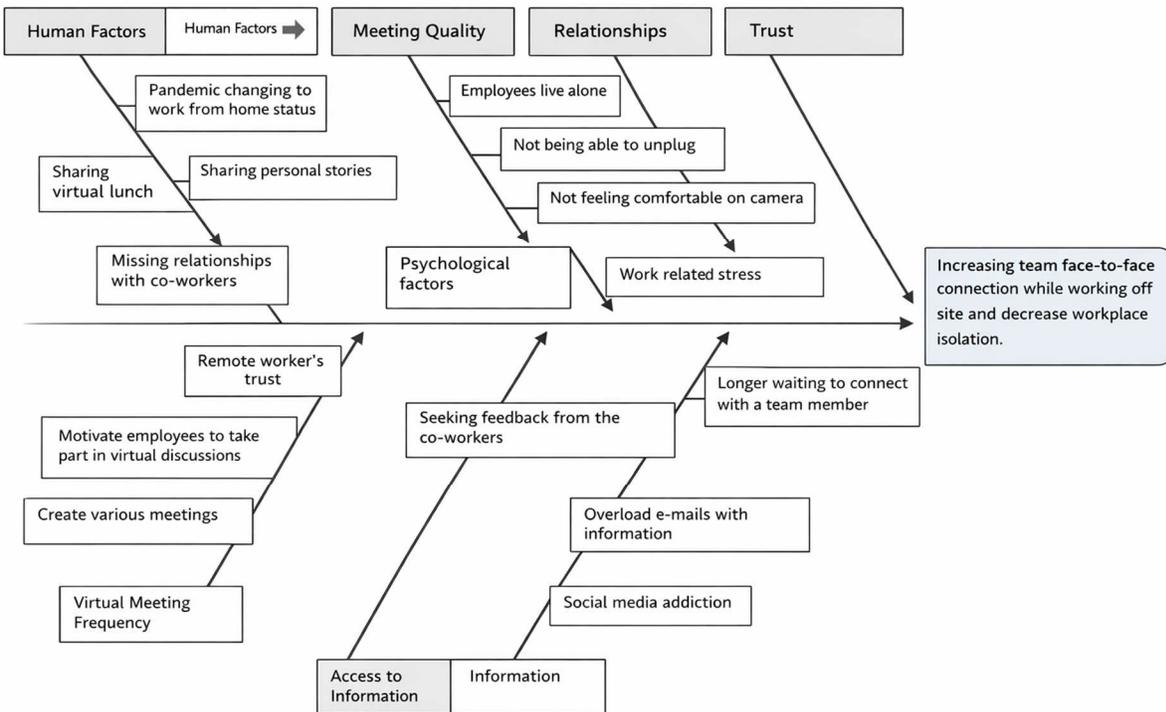
Organizational Background and Gap

Organizational leaders noticed reduced performance and team cohesion during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. A Rothwell (2013)-style gap analysis was conducted, identifying a measurable discrepancy between the organization’s desired state of employee connectedness and the reported experiences of its remote workforce. Prior to widespread remote work adoption, approximately 90% of employees reported feeling connected to their team and immediate manager. Following the COVID-19–related transition to hybrid and remote arrangements, reported connectedness declined to 86% in 2020 and 2021 and further to 82% by 2022. Although task coordination continued through virtual platforms, relational connection did not recover to pre-remote levels. This sustained decline signaled an operational and cultural performance gap, rather than a temporary adjustment.

The study site was a U.S.-based disability insurance organization with more than 1,000 employees. Established before 1900, the organization historically relied on frequent interaction, informal problem solving, and relationship-based collaboration. As daily interaction shifted from spontaneous co-located exchanges to scheduled, webcam-mediated meetings, employees reported a reduction in informal communication and relational visibility. Prior research suggests that spontaneous, nontask interaction supports trust development, cohesion, and perceived belonging in teams (Golden et al., 2008; Ha, 2021). As such interactions decrease, employees may experience diminished social reinforcement and increased perceptions of isolation.

To better understand the progressive decline in connectedness, a diagnostic cause-and-effect analysis was conducted using an Ishikawa framework and pre-intervention activities during gap analysis. Figure 1 summarizes the structural, psychological, and relational factors identified during stakeholder discussions, participant interviews, and field observations.

Figure 1
Diagnostic Analysis of Contributors to Workplace Isolation



The analysis indicated that isolation was not attributable solely to technological insufficiency. Structural factors included reduced spontaneous interaction and increased reliance on scheduled meetings. Psychological factors included camera hesitancy, self-consciousness, and reluctance to initiate dialogue. Conflicting participant comments such as “I’m not ready to open the camera in the morning” (P2), coupled with concerns about appearance, reflected barriers to visible participation; others reported that seeing colleagues on camera reduced feelings of isolation and improved focus. These observations confirm research linking remote work isolation to reduced informal contact, diminished relational cues, and heightened self-monitoring in virtual environments (Kato et al., 2020; Vasic, 2020).

Importantly, the convergence of these structural and psychological dynamics suggested that the performance gap was relational in nature. Virtual platforms preserved workflow continuity but did not automatically reproduce the relational density of in-person environments. As prior scholarship indicated, workplace isolation in remote contexts results from multiple intersecting conditions rather than a single cause (Golden et al., 2008; Ha, 2021).

Addressing the identified gap, therefore, required more than increasing meeting frequency or upgrading technology. The organization requested an intervention intentionally designed to restore relational visibility, normalize reciprocal engagement, and embed informal interaction within routine virtual workflows. Leadership desired a plan that would allow continued virtual work with a plan to overcome its limitations. This article’s study was developed to fulfill the leadership request.

Conceptual Framework and Relevant Literature

Social exchange theory provides the conceptual foundation for this study. The theory conceptualizes workplace relationships as ongoing exchanges in which individuals evaluate interactions in terms of perceived benefits, costs, and reciprocity (Emerson, 1976). Acts of trust, support, or goodwill create expectations of reciprocal response, shaping perceptions of organizational commitment, citizenship behaviors, and relational attachment (Ahmad et al., 2023; Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). In remote environments, where informal visibility and spontaneous reinforcement are reduced, exchange processes may become less salient, potentially weakening perceptions of reciprocity and connectedness (Mikołajczyk, 2022). Research suggests that when organizations signal trust – such as through visible leadership engagement or flexible support – employees reciprocate through increased engagement and performance (Ahmad et al., 2023; Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022). Conversely, diminished relational visibility and reduced informal interaction disrupt exchange expectations, contributing to feelings of isolation.

The expansion of remote and hybrid work has intensified concerns regarding workplace isolation, employee connectedness (Marshall et al., 2007; Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022) and personal and organization productivity (Hackney et al., 2022). Reduced face-to-face interaction limits opportunities for spontaneous communication, informal feedback, and social bonding, which are central to belonging and engagement (Hadley & Wright, 2024). Studies have linked remote workplace isolation to diminished well-being, reduced job satisfaction, lower work involvement, and impaired performance (Marshall et al., 2007; Mikołajczyk, 2022; Yu & Liu, 2023). Although remote work may enhance concentration and task performance, its positive effects can be attenuated when social isolation undermines relational support (Toscano et al., 2025). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, scholars increasingly emphasized that isolation represents a structural and relational risk within distributed work systems rather than merely an individual adjustment challenge (Bussin & Swart-Opperman, 2021).

Workplace isolation emerges from interacting mechanisms. Remote work replaces spontaneous exchanges common in physical offices with scheduled, technology-mediated interactions (Ha, 2021). While digital tools facilitate task coordination, they dampen the transmission of relational cues, informal problem-solving, and affective bonding (Buffer, 2023; Ha, 2021). Psychologically, isolation has been associated with loneliness, stress, anxiety, and reduced willingness to participate visibly in virtual meetings or seek feedback (Kato et al., 2020; Vasic, 2020). These dynamics are particularly salient for employees in new or evolving roles who rely heavily on informal guidance (Kato et al., 2020). Organizations that prioritize psychological safety, visible leadership presence, and relational access appear better positioned to mitigate the effects of isolation (Mihalca et al., 2021; Mikołajczyk, 2022). Practically, remote workers may be less focused during interactions, especially when off-camera, as they can simulate interaction while multitasking with home-related activities (Gibbs et al., 2022).

Consistent with social exchange theory, interventions aimed at reducing workplace isolation increasingly emphasize relational and behavioral mechanisms rather than technological solutions alone. Research indicates that leadership training, supportive management practices, and visible engagement can reduce employee loneliness and improve organizational outcomes (Mohr et al., 2024; Stein et al., 2021). Effective virtual interventions often incorporate

informal interaction opportunities, empathy-focused communication, and leader modeling to strengthen reciprocal norms within distributed teams (Demerouti, 2023; D’Olivera & Persico, 2023; Tanaka et al., 2023). Collectively, this literature suggests that intentional relational design – particularly when supported by visible leadership – can activate exchange processes that reinforce connectedness in remote work environments. As a result, these known processes were embedded in the planned intervention.

Method

A qualitative applied intervention project was created as part of a doctoral program action research capstone assessment. This project was conducted in alliance with a partner organization as described in the Organizational Background and Gap section. A structured, phased development model emerged from the multifaceted action project. This section describes the data collection, participants, intervention, and the overall structure of the project.

Design

This qualitative field study investigated how relational engagement evolved during the implementation of a structured virtual connection initiative within a remote work unit. Although the CI was originally introduced to address a practical organizational concern, the present study focused on documenting and analyzing the developmental progression of engagement behaviors observed across the intervention period. The study employed an intervention-based qualitative design incorporating iterative facilitation and reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). Social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) served as the conceptual lens for interpreting relational dynamics.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted within a U.S.-based disability insurance organization employing more than 1,000 individuals. Participants included one manager and six team members operating in a remote or hybrid capacity. Participants were purposively selected based on shared team membership and voluntary engagement in the CI.

Research Questions

- RQ1: How did participants experience the implementation of the CI?
- RQ2: How did engagement behaviors shift over the course of the CI?
- RQ3: What aspects of the CI were perceived as effective or in need of refinement?
- RQ4: How did participants describe the CI’s influence on workplace isolation?

Intervention Context

The CI consisted of recurring virtual group and individual touchpoints implemented over approximately 2 months. These structured yet informal meetings were integrated into routine work rhythms and included icebreaker-oriented sessions, short relational check-ins, and low-agenda coffee or lunch conversations, culminating in 1:1 interviews with participants. The intent was to create visible, psychologically safe spaces for nontask interaction within existing virtual platforms rather than introduce new technologies or formal performance processes. Meetings were intentionally brief and relationship-centered. Leadership participation was consistent throughout the initiative, and light facilitation strategies were introduced as needed to support dialogue and reduce hesitancy among participants. While originally designed to address a practical organizational concern, the intervention provided a structured context within which patterns of relational engagement could be observed over time.

Data Collection

Data were collected over approximately 2 months through (a) observations of recurring virtual relational touchpoints, (b) semistructured individual interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams, and (c) contemporaneous researcher field notes. Interviews followed a semistructured protocol (Appendix A) designed to explore perceptions of engagement, participation behaviors, and perceived shifts in connectedness. Repeated interactions across multiple meetings enabled iterative clarification of emerging patterns and informal member validation.

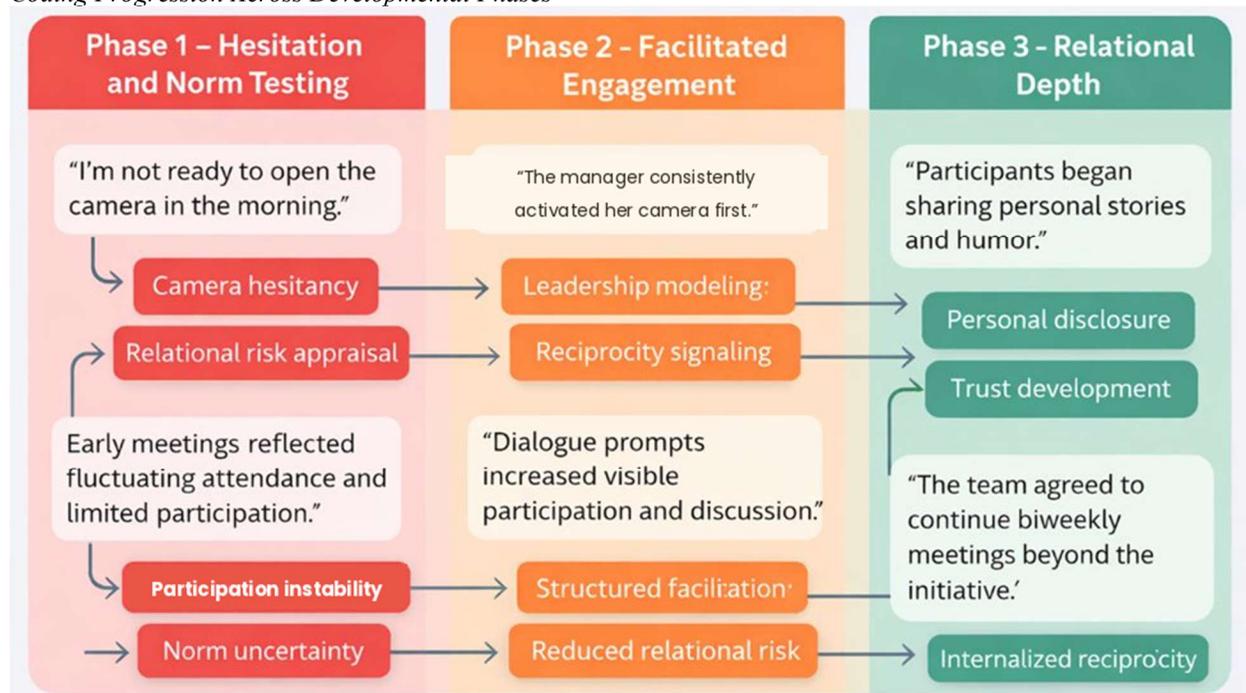
Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006, 2022) 6-step reflexive thematic analysis process. Interview transcripts, session observations, and researcher field notes were read repeatedly to establish familiarity with the

data. Initial codes were generated inductively, focusing on observable engagement behaviors, expressions of relational risk, and references to reciprocity, trust, and connection.

Codes were then compared across time points to identify patterns in how participation behaviors shifted during the intervention period. Rather than organizing findings into static thematic categories, the analysis emphasized temporal progression and changes in exchange expectations. Through iterative comparison, clustered codes revealed a developmental pattern consisting of three sequential phases: hesitation and norm testing, facilitated engagement and reciprocity signaling, and relational depth and internalized exchange. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of session observations, interview accounts, and field reflections, as well as prolonged engagement across multiple relational touchpoints. Figure 2 illustrates how the coding patterns emerged into the developmental model.

Figure 2
Coding Progression Across Developmental Phases



Results: A Three-Phase Developmental Model of Remote Relational Exchange

Analysis of session observations, interview transcripts, and researcher field notes revealed a developmental progression in relational engagement across the intervention period. Through iterative coding and cross-case comparison, three distinct but sequential phases emerged: (a) hesitation and norm testing, (b) facilitated engagement and reciprocity signaling, and (c) relational depth and sustainability. These phases represent developmental shifts in how participants evaluated the costs and benefits of visible engagement within a remote context, supporting the use of social exchange theory as a guide for creating the intervention.

Phase 1 – Hesitation and Norm Testing (Uncertain Reciprocity)

Early relational touchpoints were characterized by ambiguity regarding participation norms and exchange expectations. Participants demonstrated cautious engagement behaviors, including camera avoidance, inconsistent attendance, and limited voluntary dialogue. Interview responses and session observations suggested that individuals were assessing whether visible participation would be reciprocated and whether the environment would be psychologically safe. In remote environments, where social cues are attenuated, participants appeared to evaluate relational risk before committing to active engagement. Several participants described hesitancy tied to self-consciousness or uncertainty about how they were perceived by others. Comments such as “I’m not ready to open

the camera in the morning” (P2) reflected early cost–benefit appraisal of visible interaction. Engagement during this phase was tentative, contingent on signals from others about safety and reciprocity.

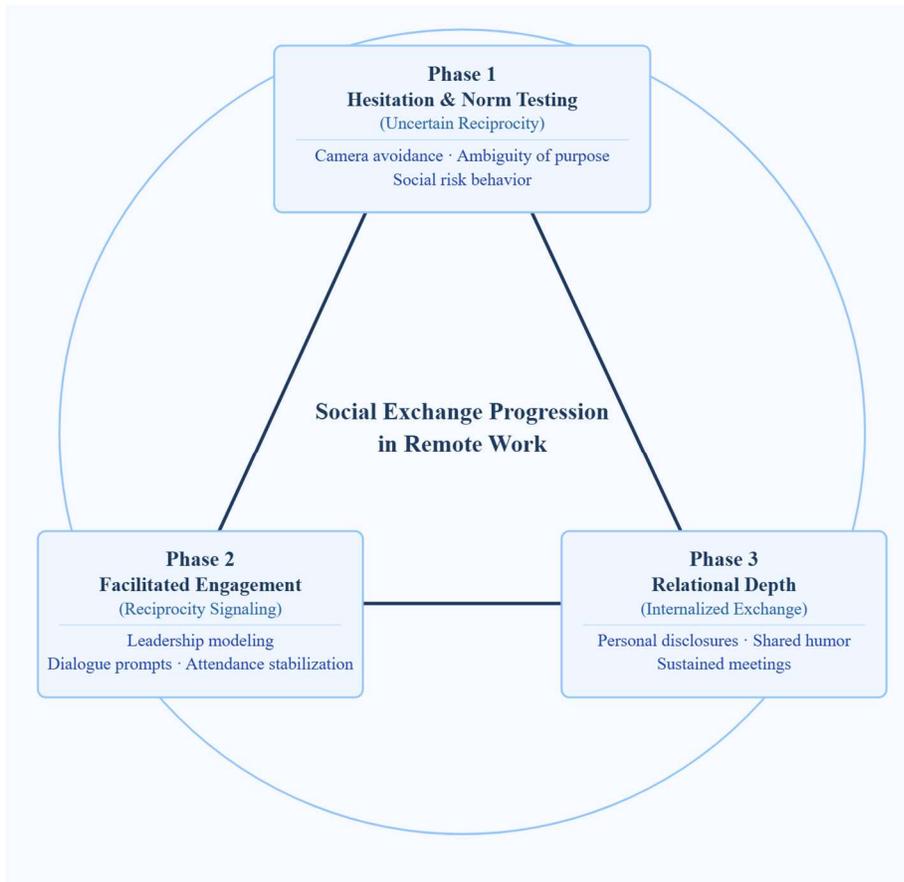
Phase 2 – Facilitated Engagement (Reciprocity Signaling and Norm Formation)

As the intervention progressed, visible leadership participation and light facilitation strategies altered exchange expectations. When the manager consistently activated her camera and engaged in dialogue, participation patterns shifted. Observational notes documented increased camera use, more stable attendance, and greater verbal contribution during relational touchpoints. Participants described feeling more comfortable engaging once visible norms were established. Structured prompts reduced uncertainty and lowered the perceived cost of participation. Engagement behaviors during this phase reflected emerging reciprocity signaling, as individuals responded to visible relational investment from leadership and peers.

Phase 3 – Relational Depth and Sustainability (Internalized Exchange and Trust)

Later relational touchpoints demonstrated increased trust, spontaneous personal disclosure, and shared humor among participants. Conversations extended beyond surface-level interaction and included storytelling, discussion of family traditions, and informal peer support. Interview data indicated that participants experienced greater ease in initiating dialogue and reported proactive outreach beyond the structured meetings. Importantly, participants collectively expressed interest in sustaining the relational touchpoints beyond the formal intervention period, suggesting internalization of reciprocal engagement norms. Engagement in this phase reflected sustained mutual investment rather than tentative participation, indicating maturation of the relational exchange process. Figure 3 presents a visual summary of the three-phase developmental progression observed during the study period.

Figure 3
A Three-Phase Remote Engagement Developmental Model



Discussion

This study identified a three-phase developmental progression of relational engagement within a remote work unit during the implementation of structured virtual relational touchpoints. The findings suggest that workplace isolation in distributed environments is not primarily a technological deficiency but a relational condition shaped by evolving expectations of reciprocity, visibility, and psychological safety. Rather than remaining static, engagement behaviors shifted over time as participants reassessed the costs and benefits of visible participation. The resulting model captures how remote relational exchange can move from uncertainty to mutual investment when supported by consistent structural cues and leadership presence.

The first phase, characterized by hesitation and norm testing, reflects early exchange uncertainty. Social exchange theory posits that individuals evaluate participation through implicit cost-benefit appraisal, particularly when reciprocity expectations are unclear (Emerson, 1976). In remote environments, where social cues are attenuated and informal reinforcement is reduced, this appraisal process may intensify (Mikołajczyk, 2022). Participants' initial camera avoidance and cautious engagement behaviors suggest that relational participation was contingent upon perceived safety and the likelihood of reciprocal response. Participants reported increased attentiveness, improved listening behaviors, and a stronger emotional connection when visual cues were present. Prior research indicated that reduced face-to-face interaction contributes to perceived isolation in remote work contexts (Golden et al., 2008; Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022), leading to the proposition that finding ways to provide those cues is critical. Emerson's (1976) theory supports that reciprocal efforts require the full circuit of connectivity.

The second phase, facilitated engagement and reciprocity signaling, illustrates how visible leadership behavior and light facilitation can alter exchange expectations. Acts of visible participation function as signals of goodwill and investment, prompting reciprocal engagement from others (Ahmad et al., 2023; Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022). As participation norms stabilized, the perceived relational cost of engagement decreased. Structured prompts and consistent leadership presence appeared to reduce ambiguity, reinforcing expectations of mutual responsiveness.

The third phase, relational depth and sustainability, reflects the maturation of exchange processes. Repeated positive interactions can strengthen trust, normalize reciprocal engagement, and foster sustained relational commitment (Emerson, 1976). Participants' increased personal disclosure, shared humor, and voluntary continuation of meetings suggest internalization of engagement norms. In this phase, relational participation shifted from tentative compliance to self-sustaining mutual investment.

Collectively, these findings extend existing scholarship on remote work isolation by demonstrating how relational norms can develop over time when informal interaction is intentionally embedded in routine virtual workflows. While prior research emphasizes the importance of psychological safety and visible leadership in mitigating isolation (Golden et al., 2008; Mikołajczyk, 2022; Mohr et al., 2024), the present study contributes a developmental lens that clarifies how such mechanisms unfold over time. The model suggests that consistent relational cues, visible reciprocity, and low-risk engagement structures are central to restoring connectedness in distributed teams.

Practical Application: Five Levers

Findings from this study suggest that treating remote workplace isolation as primarily a technological problem oversimplifies the issue. Isolation emerges as a relational outcome rooted in reduced interaction, diminished emotional visibility, and misinterpretations common in text-based and audio-only communication. Previous research and common knowledge also point to multitasking and home-based interruptions as contributing to a lack of focused attention during workplace socialization (Gibbs et al., 2022). The CI demonstrated that small, repeatable, low-cost relational practices embedded within routine virtual platforms can meaningfully influence how employees experience connection in distributed environments. As a result of this study, five practical and easy-to-implement levers emerged. Figure 4 provides a visual depiction of these levers.

Lever 1: Visual Engagement Matters

Encouraging camera-on participation, when modeled consistently by leadership, strengthened attentiveness and relational presence. This aligns with prior research demonstrating that visual cues and informal interaction reduce perceived professional isolation in remote contexts (Golden et al., 2008; Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022). Organizations seeking to improve connectedness should normalize visible participation as a reciprocal signal of engagement rather than mandate it as a compliance requirement.

Lever 2: Psychological Safety Precedes Authentic Participation

Early hesitation around camera use and misunderstandings about the CI’s purpose revealed that employees evaluate relational initiatives through a cost–benefit lens. Informal structure, clear messaging, and leadership participation reduced perceived risk and increased voluntary engagement. This reflects social exchange theory’s principle that consistent supportive behavior strengthens trust and reciprocal investment (Emerson, 1976) and aligns with research emphasizing psychological safety in virtual teams (Mikołajczyk, 2022).

Lever 3: Leadership Visibility Catalyzes Engagement Among Staff

When leaders attended sessions and modeled engagement, participation stabilized and dialogue deepened. Supportive leadership behaviors have been shown to reduce workplace loneliness and strengthen cohesion in virtual settings (Mohr et al., 2024; Stein et al., 2021). In practice, leader participation signals organizational endorsement of relational investment.

Lever 4: Authentic, Nontask Interaction Creates Durable Bonds

Conversations unrelated to work strengthened familiarity and trust, supporting prior findings that informal communication reduces isolation and increases cohesion (Ha, 2021). Organizations should protect agenda-free relational spaces rather than eliminate them in favor of efficiency.

Lever 5: Flexibility Sustains Participation

Adjusting meeting times and maintaining low-pressure formats reduced structural barriers to engagement. Flexibility signals organizational support, a key antecedent of reciprocal commitment in social exchange relationships. Remote engagement efforts must account for workload realities to remain sustainable.

Figure 4
Five Levers



Note. Adjust the timing and format of the intervention to remove structural barriers to engagement.

Conclusion and Ideas for Future Research

This study examined how an intentionally structured yet informal relational intervention influenced perceived connectedness among remote employees. Findings suggest that framing remote workplace isolation primarily as a technological problem oversimplifies the issue. Isolation emerged as a relational outcome associated with reduced interaction, diminished emotional visibility, and ambiguity in virtual communication. The CI demonstrated that small, repeatable, low-cost relational practices delivered through routine virtual platforms can meaningfully influence how employees experience connection in distributed environments.

Leadership visibility, psychological safety, informal dialogue, and structural flexibility collectively shaped participation patterns and relational depth. Rather than relying on technological upgrades or formal performance systems, the intervention illustrated how consistent modeling, predictable cadence, and agenda-free interaction can activate reciprocal engagement norms consistent with social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976). These findings align with prior research indicating that informal communication and supportive leadership reduce professional isolation in remote contexts (Golden et al., 2008; Mikołajczyk, 2022; Mohr et al., 2024).

Although no postintervention survey data were collected, participants described increased feelings of connection and demonstrated observable behavioral shifts, including voluntary continuation of sessions and proactive outreach to colleagues. These patterns suggest that relational norms can develop through intentional, visible, and psychologically safe virtual practices. For organizations navigating remote or hybrid work, the implication is practical: connection-building should be treated as an operational design decision. Leader-supported relational structures can be embedded within existing workflows without substantial financial or technological investment. Future survey results using validated postintervention instruments could assess connectivity and isolation, although whether the organization has done a follow-up survey was unknown at the time of publication – a significant limitation of this study.

Several other limitations warrant consideration. The study was conducted within a single organizational unit and involved a small participant group, limiting its transferability and potentially reducing the likelihood of measurable organizational impact. Leadership participation may also have influenced engagement behaviors despite efforts to reinforce voluntariness.

Despite ongoing debates about the future of remote work, distributed arrangements will remain a structural feature of contemporary organizations. Thus, future research should examine the durability of relational interventions across longer time horizons and diverse organizational contexts. Quantitative follow-up studies using validated engagement or belongingness measures could strengthen inference, and comparative research across hybrid, fully remote, and co-located teams may clarify contextual boundary conditions. Mixed-method designs may further illuminate how relational norms evolve in distributed environments. A structured roll-out of the successful processes should be implemented, studied, and reported to determine whether a large-scale impact might result from an organization-wide CI.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol for 1:1s

RQs	Interview Questions
RQ1: How did participants experience the implementation of the CI?	How can The Connectedness Initiative equip you with practical strategies to foster stronger connections within remote teams? Please share an example of a strategy you've learned and how you plan to apply it to enhance communication among remote team members. What challenges do you anticipate when implementing these strategies, and how do you plan to overcome them?
RQ2: How did engagement behaviors shift over the course of the CI?	In what ways will you measure the effectiveness of the strategies in improving team connections? How can we create a culture of continuous support and feedback to sustain connections among remote teams post-training? What resources or support do you feel would be helpful as you continue to implement these strategies?
RQ3: What aspects of the CI were perceived as effective or in need of refinement?	Which aspects of the intervention most effectively enhanced connections among remote team members? Please provide examples of the parts of the intervention implementation that were effective. What intervention components did you find less effective, and what suggestions do you have for improvement?
RQ4: How did participants describe the CI's influence on workplace isolation?	How did The Connectedness Initiative sessions equip you to handle feelings of isolation while working remotely? In what ways did the intervention facilitate a stronger sense of community and support among colleagues? What additional resources or strategies would have been helpful for you to manage workplace isolation better?

Note. Interview questions for RQ1 and RQ2 were administered prior to intervention implementation; questions for RQ3 and RQ4 were administered following the conclusion of the Connectedness Initiative.

Appendix B: Session 1 Structure

This interactive, camera-enabled workshop emphasized active participation and screen sharing rather than slide-dependent delivery. Incorporate visual background tools (e.g., 3D Zoom environments) as an icebreaker to encourage early engagement. However, discontinue these features before content delivery to preserve screen-sharing functionality and reduce distraction.

Welcome & Introduction (10 mins)

- Briefly discuss the importance of connectivity in remote work.
- Share personal experiences about isolation (as a facilitator).

Icebreaker Activity (5 mins)

- Activity Name: "Two Truths and a Lie" - allows team members to learn fun facts about each other.
Instructions: Participants find items related to specific prompts (e.g., something that makes you happy, a book you love) and share them on camera.

Understanding Workplace Isolation (15 mins)

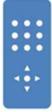
- Present statistics or anecdotes about isolation in remote environments.
- Facilitate a discussion: "What do isolated feelings look like in our team?"

Conclusion & Next Steps (5 mins)

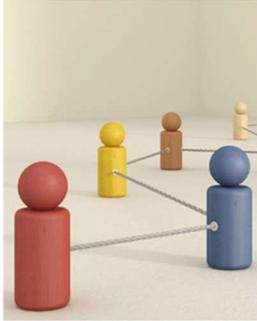
- Emphasize the importance of consistency and check-ins.
- Suggest ongoing feedback.

Appendix C: Interventional PowerPoint Example

The CI: Strengthening Remote Connectedness



Interactive Workshop for Engagement and Collaboration



Workshop Purpose

- Design interactive engagement opportunities in remote teams
 - Foster relational connection in virtual environments
 - Encourage collaborative learning and shared contribution

Why Connection Matters

- Reduces feelings of workplace isolation
 - Strengthens trust and psychological safety
 - Enhances engagement and collaboration



Enhancing Connectivity

- Discuss methods to improve remote team connection
 - Identify barriers to authentic engagement
 - Share current practices that foster connection



Practical Methods to Enhance Connectivity

- Camera-on engagement when appropriate
 - Informal check-ins or coffee chats
 - Agenda-free opening minutes in meetings
 - Leadership modeling of relational behaviors



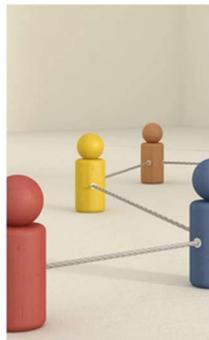
Wrap-Up Discussion

- Select one method to implement immediately
 - Discuss why this method fits your team culture
 - Identify potential challenges and solutions



Conclusion & Next Steps

- Encourage continuous feedback and reflection
 - Commit to visible, consistent relational practices
 - Schedule follow-up connection opportunities



Closing Reflection

- “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller
 - Connection is key to a thriving remote workplace.