Background:
- OPTIMUM is a multi-site pragmatic clinical trial for persons with chronic low back pain randomized to a mindfulness clinical pain management program or to usual care. The trial is conducted by three health care system sites; Boston Medical Center, University of Pittsburgh and UNC-Chapel Hill in partnership with Piedmont Health Services.
- Participant engagement and retention are vital factors in pragmatic clinical trials to ensure participants’ commitment to the entire course of the study.
- Implementing robust engagement, recruitment, and retention strategies help achieve the study goals while enhancing participant safety and trust.
- Our goals were to identify effective cohort retention and engagement strategies and then to implement the most effective and efficient.

Methods:
- Over three 1-hour sessions the OPTIMUM team reviewed recruitment and retention methods.
- Team members included investigators, project coordinators, and research assistants across all three sites.
- The team discussion was led by study PI Dr. Natalia Morone and explored all the methods used at each site.

Retention and Engagement for the Mindfulness Intervention Arm
- Additionally, our strategies are often adjusted based on the group. Retention and engagement for the mindfulness intervention participants includes:
  - Peer support
  - Communication and connection between participants in mindfulness breakout rooms
  - Interaction with the study clinician
  - Reinforce mindfulness and meditation and its connection to decreasing pain

Conclusion
It is important to understand participant needs and find methods and strategies to motivate participants to remain engaged with the study. We have found a variety of strategies to engage and retain participants, with one of the most important being a warm and compassionate approach to ongoing interaction and communication.

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