

# Distance Simulation Affinity Group Nurtures Innovation, Dissemination, Education, and Advocacy

The Distance Simulation Affinity Group (DisSimAG) was created to support simulationists interested in or currently carrying out distance simulation. The DisSimAG is only a year-and-a-half old, but already has nearly 500 members.

The initial goals of this group were modest, but the leadership hopes this group will become a forum to share trials and triumphs, barriers, and drivers of implementing and sustaining distance simulation-based education (DSBE) programs and contribute to important work that is yet to be done. We endeavor to be the nurturers of innovation, dissemination, education, and advocacy. This year's IMSH theme has helped us see how to pivot efforts to support not only development of DSBE, but also how we can play a role in supporting the larger community of simulation and simulationists as well.

Some continue to view DSBE as a separate temporary entity. We believe that this is not the case, and evidence supports this claim. While the world has been able to return to in-person events and face-to-face teaching and learning, the lessons learned during the pandemic around DSBE have been hard-fought and continue to be put to effective use.



**Some continue to view DSBE as a separate temporary entity. We believe that this is not the case, and evidence supports this claim.**

As a result, distance simulation is still widely used. Publications are increasingly emerging, summits dedicated to distance simulation now exist, and groups similar to the DisSimAG are being established within other organizations. With the continuation of this approach and the enthusiasm for continued use, work remains to fully establish safety, quality, and guidelines for effective DSBE. This



Image Credit: Made with Midjourney with prompt by Jill Sanko

will only be accomplished through coordinated and focused advocacy. Through our collaborative efforts we anticipate a day when DSBE is seen as another branch of the simulation tree, another simulation-based education (SBE) domain, another method to reach students, and an important innovation to disseminate education to learners geographically distant, but who can benefit from learning together using DSBE.

Much like the initial stages of healthcare simulation, distance simulation was initially an idea to bridge a gap. However, the growing prevalence and interest indicates the emergence of a new simulation domain. This underscores the importance of delving deeper into understanding its intricacies, establishing best practices, and fostering innovation alongside broader simulation efforts. We hope the DisSimAG will bring together simulationists engaged in the community of practice to build a framework for the continuation and development of DSBE as an educational tool,

be a voice for its dissemination, and advocate for its appropriate and safe use as a new SBE domain.

Considerable work remains, including developing ways to foster psychological safety, professional development, and the best means to evaluate DSBE. We hope this work starts here among DisSimAG members. For some, this might be a leadership role; for others, as a community member contributing to or leading discussions; and for others this might mean occasionally looking in.

As a new group, we are still learning what the community wants. We would love your help shaping the future of the DisSimAG and DSBE, and we seek the input of the community regarding what you want and need from your membership. The best way for us to help one another is to build a community that serves the needs and desires of its members. As you learn and network here at IMSH, we hope that you will share your ideas about distance simulation and the DisSimAG.