

NEW! Distance Education and FDC

In light of the ‘lockdowns’ accompanying the COVID19 pandemic, many FDC instructors around the country faced the problem of how to continue and finish their classes. In response, National FDC[®] Director Claire Forest gave temporary permission for instructors to complete on-going classes through June 2020 by using Zoom, Skype, or other ‘virtual meeting’ software; most of these emergency adaptations appear to have gone well.

As the country is now transitioning out of lockdown – a transition that varies from state to state and is expected to be ragged in the best of circumstances – we considered how to continue FDC[®] training in the coming months and possibly years. FDC[®] training is inherently an interpersonal process, engaging in back-and-forth discussion and sharing stories; this is one reason we have resisted turning it into an ‘on-line’ course.

“Distance learning,” however, is different from an “on-line course.” The adaptations so many of you have made, using live meeting software to continue class presentations and discussions, reflect Distance Learning. Although possibly not quite as engaging as the standard in-person classes, experience in the last few months suggests that model can work effectively.

Therefore, National FDC[®] has created the possibility of new, all or partial distance-learning classes, when that is necessary for health and safety. This model may also be useful for rural areas where distances are prohibitive and have prevented FDC’s traditional in-person model. To facilitate development of this new FDC distance-learning model, and to ensure that both legal/copyright, and credentialing requirements are met, we have prepared a list of guidelines and tips that can be found under the *Instructor Resources* section. We are also making available to certified instructors, preformatted PowerPoints for screen-sharing while teaching FDC via Distance Learning. Qualified instructors can find those materials in the *Instructor Resources* section.

In addition, the Request to start form now includes a check-box for *requesting permission* to use distance-learning in the class (and briefly explaining why that is necessary). If permission is granted by National FDC[®] Director Claire Forest, you will be required to complete a short questionnaire-report when the course is finished, so that we can better understand how this model has worked and how it might be improved.

Keep in mind, this model is *not* an impersonal, computer-driven “on-line course.” It retains the traditional FDC[®] emphasis on adult development and empowerment, under the guidance of a trained instructor. We hope that even under these new circumstances, the added flexibility of distance learning will bring the benefits of FDC[®] training to an expanding circle of front-line workers, their supervisors, and the families they serve.