

# PDP Communiqué

## Surviving and Thriving in the Changed COVID-19 Workplace

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In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, our workplaces have transformed from in-person, in-the-office to remote, online, work-at-home almost overnight and without willful intention. While in January 2020, many in the workforce may have been cautiously anticipating incremental benefits to our work environments and learning institutions from emerging technologies in the twenty-first century; only a very few infectious diseases healthcare specialists could have foreseen the oncoming pandemic and the dramatic transformation that would occur under the pressure that has swept the globe and forced innovation that otherwise would have taken years and careful planning to realize. In short, the pandemic jump-started the changing world of work in the twenty-first century.

This shift to remote, online working and learning has been challenging for employers and employees alike. For employers, the challenge has been to institute new policies and practices that will allow for flexibility so workers can work as productively from home environments as they could at the workplace. For employees, the challenge has been to adapt by adopting different work habits in the changing environment and relying more heavily on immediate supervisors to interpret the new work-at-home policies and practices. Managers are further challenged to provide support and guidance that address the wide range of effects not only of the virus but of the physical distancing and other personal protective equipment (PPE) measures, particularly if they are required to monitor and enforce new practices in the return to the worksite as outlined by the New York Governor's guidelines of September 2020. The changes in workplace interactions and work habits require substantial accommodation and flexibility. Social distancing requirements need to be fully understood and adhered to by employees. Workplace

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A Newsletter from the  
**Professional  
Development Program,  
Rockefeller College**



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Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Webex, and Remote Desktop Services were among the tools used by PDP staff to successfully shift to and sustain remote work in 2020.

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modifications need to be implemented and supported for safe reopening. Flexibility needs to vary by industry and occupation. Settings that involve close physical proximity with an elevated risk of infection require stricter infection control measures than settings that do not involve proximity.

Furthermore, the extent to which employees themselves have the discretion to balance virus-related risks with their need to be at their worksite is not yet clear. For those with the most significant concerns, those with the greatest illness risks, and those working in high-risk work environments, greater accommodation may be required. Some workers may desire to work from home indefinitely while others may want an extended leave from work. In workplaces that pose untenable risks, workers may seek other job roles, choose unemployment, or elect early retirement. How such decisions are made to ensure individual employee and employer's voices are heard requires a balance. Just as with return-to-work after an injury, employers may struggle to maintain uniform and fair practices while being responsive to workers' concerns. It will be important to involve multiple stakeholders in the process to ensure equity of treatment.

In addition, since the existing occupational landscape shows that return-to-work and worker health and safety risks are stratified by income, language, immigration status, social rank, and other elements of socioeconomic status, with disadvantaged workers at greatest risk of negative outcomes from COVID-19, the pandemic will no doubt reflect that these workers are overrepresented among essential workers and those deemed necessary for businesses to remain open or reopen. Low-income workers are more likely to have jobs deemed essential with no options for working from home. Consequently, workplace exposures may be more difficult to control. Working remotely for this group is impractical; the threat of layoffs may lead low-income workers to accept workplace exposure hazards despite fears of infection. Employer policies related to reopening should pay particular attention to the consequences to these workers.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has surely challenged and changed our conventional practices. The reopening process will see tremendous variations across workplaces and between workers in the same occupations. The complexity of multilevel factors will influence whether individual workers will accept workplace safety risks,

## **PDP September 2020 Remote Survey Results**

A brief online survey was e-mailed to all PDP staff on September 17, 2020, to get their feedback regarding their experiences and opinions about working remotely from home in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A Likert scale from 1 - 5 was used by respondents to rate a series of close-ended survey statements listed in Graph 1. One represents the lowest rating (1=Strongly Disagree), and five is the highest and most positive rating (5=Strongly Agree).

A total of 166 PDP staff received the survey, and 107 responded for a response rate of 64%. The aggregate average for all eight statements was a high 4.58 out of 5.00. The averages displayed in Graph 1 reveal a key survey result. PDP staff strongly embraced and felt they could accomplish their work assignments effectively from home. All survey statements had an average of 4.50 or higher out of 5.00, and the averages ranged from 4.50 to 4.71. All averages indicate staff had very favorable experiences working remotely. Statement 2, "I have worked well independently in a remote setting," had the highest average of 4.71 out of 5.00. Statement 3, "Working remotely, I have had good experiences collaborating with staff," had the lowest average of 4.50 out of 5.00, which is still a high average.

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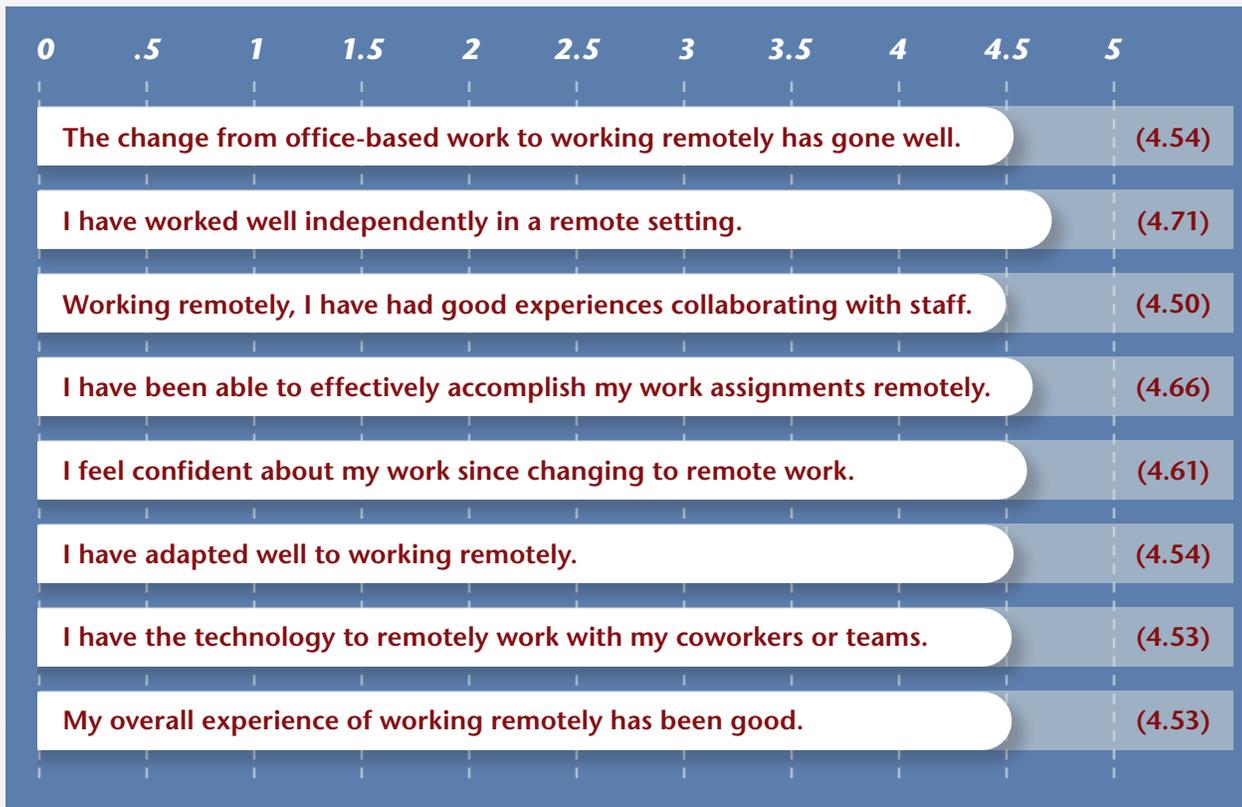
trust organizational measures and their coworkers, modify work habits, return to shared working spaces, and resume productivity as it was prior to COVID-19. Consequently, Human Resource departments find themselves negotiating terms of return-to-work in uncharted territory.



*Eugene Monaco*

At PDP, workplace changes in response to the pandemic have been more transitional than transformational. As a professional development organization serving clients in widely distributed geographic locations across New York State and beyond, we had relied on remote online

**Graph 1: Survey Statement Averages (N=107)**



Survey respondents were asked if they used any of the software, platforms, or applications listed in Graph 2 while working remotely. Almost all (97%) of respondents used Zoom. Teams was also used very frequently by 91% of the respondents. Eighty-five percent of respondents used the Webex application, and 84% used Remote Desktop. The SharePoint platform was the least used tool; it was used by 65% of the respondents.

**Graph 2: Percentages for Types of Software, Platforms or Applications Used Working Remotely (N=107)**



**Graph 3: Number of Comments by Respondents to Describe Experience Working Remotely (N=93)**

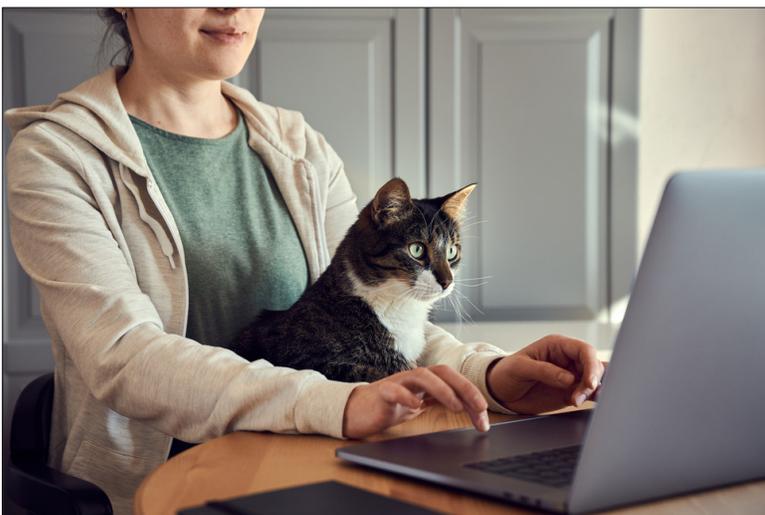


Respondents were asked one open-ended survey question regarding their experiences working remotely. A content analysis was conducted for the 93 respondents who provided comments, and Graph 3 displays the major categories. Some respondents provided more than one comment.

Single comments that did not fall into the categories in Graph 3 include:

- SharePoint was difficult to use
- Used the time it would take to commute to work as a time to exercise and improve health
- The lack of childcare was difficult
- Some good and difficult days
- Missed using two screens
- Better than the office and good for a few months, but workload increased
- It became more difficult

In summary, the respondents overwhelmingly had a very positive response to working remotely and had very good experiences. **PDP**



# Spotlight on PDP Projects During the Pandemic

## The Upstate Homelessness Services Training and Resources System Project Video Trainings

The Upstate Homelessness Services Training and Resources System project aims to build core competencies for homeless services providers, contribute to improved service delivery, reduce staff turnover, and improve outcomes for unstably housed individuals and families. The project's target audience includes individuals who work at publicly-funded organizations that provide direct services to people experiencing homelessness. These workers address the daily needs of NYS's most vulnerable populations and work with them to find and maintain stable housing. They provide services and care for individuals in crisis 24/7, 365 days per year.

In 2019, and until March 2020, programming developed for this audience was delivered across NYS exclusively using a regional, classroom-based model. When the COVID-19 pandemic brought in-person activity to a halt, the project responded by shifting to an online model that included video trainings.

The content for these videos came from our New Worker Institute, a two-day training designed to orient new employees to working with people experiencing homelessness and to provide a review and refresher to those who have experience in the field. Based on sponsor and participant requests, we developed four of the classroom training topics into PowerPoint presentations with voiceover scripts. The scripts included activities for workers to complete while watching the video to enhance interactivity and learning. It also called for multiple presenters of diverse ages and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Several PDP staff members served as presenters.

This spring, while working from home, PDP's Media Production team remotely guided each of the presenters through recording their script using Zoom. Presenters performed the scripts to get the right feel, look, and sound for their portions. They then added the PowerPoint graphics and brought the different Zoom recordings together to make a single, coherent



 Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

A still from *Managing Conflict at Work*

20-minute video. Two videos, *You, the Worker* and *Engaging with Shelter Residents*, were created this way.

In late June, when going to the PDP Studio became an option, Media Production worked with the presenters and a subject matter expert to help make them feel comfortable in front of the camera. Two more videos, *Managing Conflict at Work* and *Crisis Management in the Shelter Setting*, were produced in the PDP studio. The sponsor was happy with the professional results and indicated that the videos would have "a long shelf life."

Making the videos was the first hurdle; distributing the videos was the second. As frontline homeless services providers, our target audience does not have access to the same registration tools normally used with our training populations.

Once again, another PDP group jumped in to help. PDP's Instructional Technologies Unit made distribution possible by developing a system that allows homeless services providers to create an individual account with a password, watch the videos, and download a certificate of completion. This was a completely new process that was developed specifically to serve direct service providers. As of the writing of this article, the videos have been viewed over 200 times.

As a result of COVID-19, PDP's projects needed to pivot quickly from onsite trainings to remote learning. The training videos produced and distributed to homeless services providers throughout the state are one example of how many departments within PDP pulled together to provide high-quality training that continues to affect NYS's most vulnerable people positively.

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## Diversity and Inclusion

Sadly, recent events, notably the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and other Black Americans, are gruesome reminders of the problem of racism in our society. Though we have been physically separated by the pandemic, as public service professionals, PDP staff have come together for many virtual discussions to consider our role in promoting equity as we support government and non-profit performance improvement by providing continuing professional education. Over the past few months, PDP formed a Diversity and Inclusion committee, chaired by Sr. Education Specialist Cindy Wilson, that has revisited and revised our organization's diversity statement. Additionally, we have hosted two well-attended webinars on *Implicit Bias and Cultural Competence* hosted by Sam Caldwell, Interim Chief Diversity Officer at the University at Albany, identified and posted multiple Diversity and Inclusion resources available to our staff through the PDP Intranet, and scheduled Lunch and Learn sessions to encourage ongoing conversations amongst staff on the important issues of race equity and social justice.

PDP staff developed and delivered training on *Race Equity and Cultural Competency* on behalf of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and integrated related content into other courses for multiple sponsors. Staff involved in this project were instrumental in encouraging colleagues to seek and offer support to each other in managing personal and professional emotions and reactions to the stark reminders of the inequities and systemic racism in our society. PDP Training Program Coordinator Lakia Green developed a new course titled *Integral Diversity in Action: Navigating Diversity*. Five deliveries of this well-received course have been conducted for PDP staff since July, and PDP intends to schedule additional sessions in the coming months.

PDP is organizationally committed to sustaining our renewed energy and focus on the achievement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all our work. **PDP**

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## Media Production Unit

The Professional Development Program's Media Production Unit has long been providing licensed child care providers in New York State with online training opportunities and was deep into developing their next live webcast when COVID-19 shuttered most workplaces in mid-March 2020.

Working closely with the Office of Children and Family Services, the Media Production Unit quickly set aside the training under development to begin work on a new curriculum. The new curriculum specifically addressed child care providers' needs and concerns during this difficult and uncertain time.

Despite having limited access to critical tools and infrastructure, the Media Production Unit quickly embraced new workflows and technologies, to capture remote interviews with over a dozen nationally recognized experts and stakeholders throughout New York State. These pre-produced video segments supplemented a live training entitled *United in Hope: Caring for Children and Child Care Providers*, which initially reached more than 1,300 childcare providers during two live offerings and many more via on-demand streaming.

Following this success, the Office of Children and Family Services again called on the Media Production Unit to provide child care providers with training concerning specific regulatory guidance as child care programs began to reopen their doors to families in June 2020. *Guidance and Best Practices for Child Care Programs Operating During the COVID-19 Emergency* reached more than 8,400 providers via 11 live offerings.

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*United in Hope: Caring for Children and Child Care Providers* was produced by PDP's Media Unit despite limited access to tools and infrastructure

# In Memory of Fazana Saleem-Ismail

June Mastan

On June 25, 2020, we lost a coworker, a friend, and an amazing light in our community, Fazana Saleem-Ismail. We honored Fazana on Friday, July 17, at 3:30 p.m. by holding a memorial service for her by web conference.

PDP also held a small tree planting ceremony in honor of Fazana on Monday, August 24, 2020, on the grounds behind Liberty Terrace student apartments. Fazana's husband, two children, parents, brother, and niece attended along with a small group of PDP staff. We want to thank the University Facilities Department, who assisted with obtaining and planting the tree for us following the short ceremony. August 24 was Fazana's birthday, making the occasion even more special. In addition, Mayor Kathy Sheehan also declared the day to be Fazana Saleem-Ismail Day in the City of Albany.

As we reflect on the loss of our colleague Fazana, there have been many comments about her great smile, compassion for others, and her ability to project a shining light wherever she went. We have many photos to remind us of those wonderful characteristics that were Fazana's trademarks. She was a tireless advocate for human rights and social justice. She loved her family so much and was always willing to lend a hand to colleagues, friends, and strangers alike. As an example, her Jazzy Sun Birthdays endeavor provided birthday cakes and parties for children living in shelters. I am sure many children and families will have happy

memories forever of the special day she provided for them. Those of us who worked closely with Fazana would describe her as very detail oriented. She wanted to make sure every trainee was accounted for in her reports, to the point that sometimes Susan Gieryc would have to gently remind her that the report needed to be finished. That was Fazana. She wanted to do her best in everything she did. Every trainee was important to her. We were very lucky to have such a kind, joyful, and giving person in our lives. She was quite simply a wonderful human being, and she will be missed. **PDP**



Fazana Saleem-Ismail



## Spotlight on PDP Projects During the Pandemic

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**Group size must be limited to no more than 15 children unless a small regulatory group size applies (e.g. toddlers, infants).**

Requirement	?	Recommended best practice
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NEW YORK STATE Office of Children and Family Services

Guidance and Best Practices for Child Care Programs Operating During the COVID-19 Emergency reached more than 8,400 providers via 11 live offerings

## PSWP's Shift to Virtual Training

The state COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions on in-person training events required the Public Service Workshops Program (PSWP) to respond quickly to meet workforce training needs virtually while ensuring quality learning experiences that employed best practices. These guidelines affected PSWP's classroom training programs, including the NYS Leadership Institute (NYSLI), Management/Confidential Workshops, and courses that PDP develops and delivers for the NYS Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) and the NYS Learning Alliance.

## Spotlight on PDP Projects During the Pandemic

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NYSLI is traditionally held in a classroom for 12 full day sessions over 8 months for up to 40 participants. Significant planning and coordination between GOER, PDP, Rockefeller College, and the instructors was undertaken to modify the classroom-based training for online delivery using live broadcasts at the PDP on-campus studio and the Zoom platform. Participants were surveyed in advance to ensure they had a device with audio and video capabilities to support real time face-to-face interaction between presenters and participants during sessions. The first session, which included remarks from University at Albany President Havidán Rodríguez, Dean of Rockefeller College R. Karl Rethemeyer, and NYS GOER Director Michael N. Volforte, was well-received by participants and stakeholders. The hours of preparation and use of the on-campus studio contributed to a very engaging and interactive learning experience.

PSWP's Development and Delivery Unit (DDU) writes curriculum and delivers training on behalf of NYS GOER. After several classroom courses were postponed due to COVID-19, priorities shifted and GOER requested that five classroom courses be developed and piloted as virtual deliveries using Webex, and then delivered as trainer certification courses to the NYS training community. The conversion of classroom courses to virtual training presented challenges. Many of the classroom courses use role-play and other small group activities to allow participants to practice new skills. However, using Webex features such as whiteboards, annotation, and break out rooms, PDP was able to retain audience engagement in the new virtual training courses. From the five classroom courses, seven virtual trainings (one of the original five was split into three shorter courses) on remote supervision, emotional intelligence, navigating change, respectful communication, developing performance standards, providing feedback, and coaching for improvement were all successfully developed and piloted for the NYS trainer community.

Due to virtually all training for state employees moving to remote delivery, GOER asked PDP to build three short Webex tutorials to help state employees get more familiar with the platform. One tutorial is for participants, and the other two will be for producers, hosts, and presenters. The participant overview tutorial was completed and released in August and was very well received. The other two courses are in development and will be completed and launched soon.



*PDP Executive Director and Public Service Professor Eugene Monaco, University at Albany President Havidán Rodríguez, GOER Project Manager Deborah Seeley, and Dean of Rockefeller College R. Karl Rethemeyer at a live NYSLI broadcast in the PDP Studio*

Additionally, several classroom workshops for NYS Management/Confidential (M/C) employees were postponed because of COVID-19. PDP staff worked with the training providers, GOER, and other state agencies to make these workshops available as virtual offerings with very positive results. PDP staff worked with workshop providers and used Zoom and its features to successfully deliver *Data Analysis*, *Managing Multiple Priorities*, and *Professional Writing* workshops. In addition, PDP was able to plan and coordinate a virtual offering of the *Aspiring Leaders Program* for M/C employees. This program was delivered over six half-day virtual sessions in September and October 2020. It was highly regarded and remains in high demand. More offerings are being planned for early 2021.

Participants have commented on how impressed they are with the virtual learning format, and there has been an increase in enrollment and demand for many of these topics. Changing to a virtual format was done out of necessity due to COVID-19, but it is also allowing us to meet the needs of more employees statewide.

## HEAP Regional Training Meetings Move Online

Every August, trainers and event planning staff from the Department of Temporary Assistance Training (DTAT) visit many of New York's major cities and interact with hundreds of trainees to deliver regional training meetings on the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). There are typically eight deliveries around the state, and many trainees look forward to this annual update.

This year, because travel around the state and gathering in large groups wasn't possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 HEAP Regional Training Meetings were conducted via Webex. As the first regional training

meeting to move from in-person to online, putting together the HEAP Regional Training Meetings was exciting, new, and a real team effort.

As the name suggests, these training meetings are typically delivered regionally. At the beginning of planning the switch to Webex, it was decided that these would remain as regional offerings to allow for better interaction between attendees and presenters.

Since there would be no printed manuals this year, DTAT staff worked with the Instructional Technologies Unit to post the materials which would normally be distributed at the in-person meetings onto the HEAP TrainingSpace event website. Attendees were encouraged to view and print the material from this site. Links to the event website and the Webex meeting, along with the agenda and additional information to prepare the attendees for the session, were e-mailed to attendees in advance.

At each meeting, the event planner took on a new role as the moderator. In that role, the event planner welcomed attendees to the meeting, introduced each speaker, managed the polling questions, and advanced the PowerPoint slides for presenters.

From a training perspective, conducting HEAP Regional Training Meetings via Webex took additional planning but went as expected with practice. The trainers had to plan their questions and convert those questions into polls. They also planned how and when to annotate on the screen, and planned interactions (e.g., using their microphones, raising their hands, answering polling questions, and annotating on the screen) that allowed for trainee engagement throughout the day. All this planning resulted in consistent deliveries for all eight training meetings.

The Participant Reaction Questionnaires noted that trainers kept trainees engaged and did a good job switching to the virtual format. This would not have been possible without all of the team members involved. By working together, the event planning team, training team, and logistics team created a successful event! Having delivered the HEAP Regional Training Meetings via Webex, we now have a strong model that can be replicated to transition other large in-person events to a virtual platform.

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# News and Views

## PDP Staff Awardees



*Amy Kerr*

### **Outstanding Administrative Support Staff Award—Amy Kerr**

Amy is a critical member of the Child Welfare Department; her work on the Child Forensic Interviewing (CC31) and the Youth Development and Runaway Homeless Youth Training Project (YDRHY)

are of particular note this year. Amy possesses multiple talents and skills that have contributed positively to her projects. Amy displays effort above and beyond her required duties, and as a result the Child Welfare Department has consistently had the actors needed for trainings, webinar participants' questions are responded to quickly and with knowledge, and course registrations are managed with accuracy and expedience. Amy's organizational skills contributed to the success of two Learning Exchanges—the Spring Directors' Retreat and the Fall Youth Wellbeing Summit on YDRHY. Amy facilitated a seamless registration process, despite not all attendees being in the registration system.



*Penny Kurtz*

### **Outstanding Professional Staff Award—Penny Kurtz**

Penny is a Training Program Coordinator and master e-learning course designer and developer with the Instructional Technologies Unit. Penny has a unique blend of instructional, graphic,

and technical design skills that she uses to build high quality e-learning projects. Penny continues to develop her already advanced skills in Lectora and refine her interface design skills by synthesizing ideas about accessibility and usability with unique visualizations that link to the subject matter. Under a pressing timeline, Penny applied her instructional, graphical, and technical design skills and highly efficient workflow to create two micro learning modules for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the NYS Department of Health's AIDS Institute. She did this while also providing SCORM packages to the CDC for 18 learning modules

to be installed into a CDC-owned learning management system. In preparation for moving these 18 modules, and at the request of the CDC, Penny updated all the curriculum for 18 modules. This was quite an intricate process to manage, but Penny handled this with expertise and finesse. Penny receives many compliments and expressions of gratitude from colleagues and coworkers for her thorough, professional, and top-quality product she delivers.



Pat Beck

### Outstanding Trainer Award—Pat Beck

Pat Beck provides training, coaching, monitoring, and recertification to help ensure high-quality health and safety training and compliance with PDP's Health & Safety Program standards. Pat recently revised the Health & Safety Training

curricula for family day care (FDC) and group FDC providers and for day care center, school-age child care, and enrolled legally exempt directors to more accurately reflect trainer experiences, her own field observations and training expertise, and feedback from OCFS. Pat's expertise is also reflected in the evaluation data, which show 100% of respondents indicated that the support from the PDP program staff during and after the training was sufficient. Pat is well organized, creative, and highly respected by her colleagues. Her ongoing commitment to excellence in training, tracking, and analyzing training delivery data and performance, as well as her decades of experience in the early childhood field, inform her actions and attitudes every day.

### Outstanding Team Award—CONNECTIONS Placement Build Team

*Team Members: Doreen Bailey, Bryan Bee, Darlene Cardillo, Liz Cassidy, Andrew Cooper, Kelly Farmer, Rudy Felder, Tricia Gagnon, Stephen Guckemus, Catherine Klose, Donna Larimore, June Mastan, Tammy Morrissey, Joe Padua, Patty Seeberger, Brian Townsend, Leigh Yatto*

The CONNECTIONS Placement Build Team helped to launch the *Placement Module*, which is used statewide to assist with matching children with the most appropriate foster care setting. It standardizes the placement process, provides more stability, and positively impacts children's safety, permanency, and well-being in foster care.

This team worked diligently to develop training materials, a job aid, and tip sheets. They assisted with training database updates to accommodate the aggressive rollout, manually registered pilot trainees, delivered training across the state, and managed print production. They participated in frequent communications with OCFS Child Welfare and Community Services, Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Bureau of Training and Development, and other project members.

The team provided training and support to over 6,500 trainees via 243 classroom training deliveries and 195 Webex training deliveries, including trainings outside of normal work hours (ranging from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. start times) to accommodate ACS's staff schedules.

### Executive Director's Award—PDP Staff

"I must say that I'm extremely proud of the way in which PDP transformed itself overnight into an online learning organization.

I remain astonished by the resolve and effort everyone has provided to keep PDP going in these difficult times. I am so proud of the collective accomplishments of everyone as you have readily adapted to the new way of working. Therefore, I want to recognize the entire PDP staff for all of your efforts by presenting this year's Executive Director's Award to All PDP Staff! Thank you for all you do in support of PDP's mission." — Gene



## **CONNECTIONS: Meeting the Demand for Virtual CONNECTIONS Training**

Under conditions that have strained our work and personal lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CONNECTIONS Training project welcomed nearly 6,000 child welfare workers across New York State (NYS) to our training deliveries for the January through September 2020 period. CONNECTIONS is the comprehensive application used by the NYS child welfare system for case documentation, tracking, assessment, oversight, and much more.

PDP uses Webex to deliver engaging, instructor-led, online CONNECTIONS training. Before COVID-19, PDP's CONNECTIONS Training Team already presented approximately 25% of their training online, so they had a bit of a head start. From January to September 2019, the project presented over 500 days of training to over 6,500 trainees. Half of these trainees attended distance learning, and a quarter of those training days were provided online. In simple terms, this means three classroom days to one online day. As PDP's Executive Director notes annually, this ratio has slowly shifted from classroom to distance learning for many years.

This year, 83% of CONNECTIONS trainees have attended distance learning and that keeps growing. Approximately 1,000 trainees attended classroom training prior to March 17th. On that day, the CONNECTIONS Training Team applied the wisdom: Take inventory, then make decisions. They considered their resources (e.g., equipment, physical spaces, internet

speeds, trainer preparation, communication channels, existing content, and training materials that could be adapted) and filled in gaps where needed.

Many course offerings increased from two to twelve per month, and class sizes doubled from 15 to 30 participants, all while trainers were successfully delivering training from their homes. With so much volume and the change in environment, there was the possibility of error. Meeting expectations for providing high-quality training required adding resources for additional class review, setup and support, and adding second trainers who assisted trainees in the double-size classes and were prepared to take over if needed.

The uncertainty meant training projections (the lead time between scheduling and delivering training) shortened to a week ahead, then two weeks, and eventually to a month by summer. Meanwhile, the Curriculum Unit was tasked with converting day-long and multiple-day classroom courses to online content. This was in addition to developing in-progress courses still considered a high priority by the sponsor; almost nothing could be pushed to the back burner. PDP staff could access the NYS system from home with full access to course development software tools.

In 2020, CONNECTIONS Training has completed and received sponsor approval on the following remote training resources: nine Webex courses, six tip sheets, and two job aids. And they continue to develop new products, adapt existing courses, and support system updates that have been an essential part of this project since inception. **PDP**

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practices as we moved to technology-assisted learning and training. Consequently, adapting to total remote learning as we were forced to cease on-site, in-person training was accomplished almost seamlessly, leading to an almost totally remote working rhythm. PDP staff had become accustomed to remote learning and training. The additional remote work was a natural next step. Our technology platform and staff were up to the challenge. So, the additional new policies implemented by our sponsors and the University were accommodated with ease. As a result, not an hour or a module of program delivery was compromised. In addition, our premier

New York State Leadership Institute adjusted to remote delivery with the support of PDP's Media Production staff and broadcast studio in a truly transformational mode, delivering a polished and sophisticated production for the first time in its history. This transformation should be credited to the openness and positive "can do" energy with which all PDP staff have responded to our changed COVID-19 workplace. They have truly lived up to our creed of "Helping government work better." I use this newsletter to showcase their achievements and to thank them. **PDP**

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