Professional development while stuck at home

By Linnea Archibald

The ACDIS team has been working remotely from home since March 16. At the time of this edition’s publication, we’ve been home for 169 days. Of course, the ACDIS team aren’t the only ones who’ve been social distancing and working remotely. As of ACDIS’ May survey, nearly 70% of CDI professionals who had previously worked on-site had been sent home to work 100% remotely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While some areas of the country and the world have begun opening up—returning to some semblance of normalcy—some of us are still home and are expecting to remain so for several more weeks or even months.

Recently, I heard someone say that the surefire way to burn out during this strange time is to continue using the phrase, “By X month/date, we’ll be back to normal.” As those dates fly by with few everyday changes, it’s easy to get discouraged. Instead, they recommend it’s better to adjust our expectations, for how things really are right now and then further adjust as necessary when the time comes, recognizing that we may never return 100% to the way things used to be.

One of the ways we’ve had to accommodate our new reality concerns is in education and personal professional development. Before COVID-19, most of us leaned on in-person avenues—attending conferences and local chapter meetings, plus collaborating in meetings and impromptu interactions with colleagues in the office. Now, however, most of those options are gone or moved to virtual platforms. It’s required a fair amount of adjustment.

Just because the landscape has shifted, however, doesn’t mean our professional development has to be put on hold until we return to “normal.” That’s why we’ve dedicated this edition of the CDI Journal to professional development and career opportunities. Most of the ideas found in this edition’s pages are not limited to the in-person space. You can accomplish a lot while sitting in front of your computer at home.

As we did in the May/June edition, we’ve marked this issue’s feature-length stories as “B” for beginner, “I” for intermediate, and “A” for advanced in the table of contents. This will help you choose the most relevant advice for your immediate personal and professional needs.
For those who are just starting their journey in CDI, take a look at the article from Associate Editor Carolyn Riel on p. 6 about jumping into a new role. For those at the midway point in their career, take a look at Riel’s article on p. 10 about unique positions and p. 32 on career ladders and next steps. For those in manager or leadership roles, I put together an article on staffing concerns—from knowing when to hire, to interviewing potential candidates—that can be found on p. 15. We also have education-centered articles suited for all stages on p. 9 and 10.

This edition also features some topic-focused articles that will broaden your horizons and give you ideas for how your CDI program can expand. On p. 19, Sharon Litwin, RN, BSHS, MHA, HCS-d, provides a home health CDI primer. Howard Rodenberg, MD, MPH, CCDS, and Audrey Mobley, MD, MMS, CCDS, discuss Mobley’s recent clinical validation research on p. 30. In her recurring “Things coders wish providers knew about …” series, Sarah Nehring, RHIT, CCS, CCDS, shares 10 CDI truths geared toward surgeons; her article can be found on p. 41.

Plus, this edition includes items suited for the concerns of the moment. On p. 36, Alba Kuqi, MD, CICA, CCS, CDIP, CCDS, CRCR, CSMC, discusses COVID-19 kidney injury clinical indicators and documentation concerns. And, on p. 38, members of our ACDIS Regulatory Committee unpack the clinical nuances related to COVID-19 in the pediatric population.

Though we all hope for the day when the pandemic and the challenges it’s brought are a distant memory, we hope that this edition will help you in your life and work right now. All of us at ACDIS are here to help you grow in your CDI careers. As always, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us.

Stay well.

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