**My Virtual Facilitation Journey**

As a public health consultant I work with multidisciplinary project partners and program teams at the local, state and national level.  As I grow in my facilitation practice I increasingly assume responsibility for meeting planning, group process, program planning and evaluation and problem solving in addition to the services and technical assistance that I provide to these various initiatives.

I started my facilitation journey with ICA several years ago by taking the basic courses in Chicago; I continue to participate in additional coursework every year.  Without exception I walk away from each course wondering how I’ve functioned for the last 25+ years without the tools that the class has equipped me with.  In most cases I am quickly able to integrate these new facilitation skills and abilities into my public health practice.

When I first spoke to Ester Mae Cox about the Virtual Facilitation Bootcamp and explained to her what I did as a public health consultant, she exclaimed “….you are going to love it!”  and she was right.  The training was intensive, condensed and worth every minute and penny invested.  In addition to becoming familiar with the basic functions of Adobe Connect, Ester Mae and Kathy McGrane have supported and mentored me as I’ve gone live with Adobe Connect in my daily work.  Upon completing the 8-week course I proceeded to secure an Adobe Connect license for the year to strengthen the public health and facilitation consultation tool kit that I draw from on a daily basis.

The best example of how it’s impacted my work is the design of a time-limited statewide evaluation project with 40-45 stakeholders.  Because the project did not have the resources for individual capacity assessments and statewide travel, I’ve been able to conduct interviews with smaller groups via Adobe Connect and get the information needed in an efficient way.  Participants love Adobe Connect and want to learn more.

Every time I use Adobe Connect I learn something more.  It’s allowed me to facilitate and participate in more interactive meetings and has cut down on my work travel as well.  I’m thrilled to have this additional “tool in my tool kit” and am grateful for the incredible support of the ICA community.

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