



## Learning in lockdown: why you should prioritise your professional development

By Louise Bennett, Joint CEO, IDPE

There has been much talk about learning a new skill during lockdown – from cooking to sewing, gardening to playing the piano – many of us are exploring new interests, studying new skills, and discovering talents we never knew we had!

However, for many, with an ever-growing to-do list and juggling work and home school, it can seem daunting to even contemplate taking time out for training. So why is it now more important than ever to take a step back and prioritise your professional development?

### Rise to the challenge

All of us have had to adjust our development plans and respond to changing demands and circumstances, as we navigate our way through these uncharted waters. It is not ideal, but many of us are finding new ways of doing things. Being forced to adapt stimulates creativity – how will you organise your next careers talk, reunion or networking event online? A lot of learning can be drawn from such innovations, and there is the opportunity to share our learning on what's worked... and what's not worked... to support us all to rise to this new challenge.

### Free training and resources

With the country on lockdown, colleagues furloughed, working reduced hours or shielding, sharing expertise and offering support is absolutely the 'right thing to do'. Many organisations are demonstrating their commitment to give back by offering free training and resources, so now is the time to access the wealth of experience and expertise on offer.

### More convenient, more comfortable, more efficient

You can learn wherever you are, whenever you want, from the comfort of your own home! Virtual professional development programmes offer you unparalleled flexibility, they are an



efficient way to access training – and there’s no additional cost or travel-time to learn from your living room.

### Invest in yourself

Just because you’re working from home or potentially furloughed, doesn’t mean you have to put your professional development on hold. This is the time to take a step back, to identify gaps in your skills and experience and consider how you can fill these. Use some of this forced downtime to invest in your own training.

### Stay positive

None of us know what the future holds. Devoting some of our quarantine time to self-education makes sense. Alongside demonstrating to your school your commitment to undertake training and providing you with new, invaluable skills and knowledge, learning can also give you a sense of control that will help you cope with the anxiety created during these uncertain times.

### How can we help?

At IDPE, we continue to share free resources and training, from webinars to podcasts, regional meet-ups to thought-pieces, we’re here to support your learning, networking and creativity. Whilst the IDPE 2020 Annual Conference is postponed, we will continue to support your professional development by launching a new, online initiative shortly – so watch this space.