

## COVID Update

The Covid pandemic continues to drastically affect FIT operations and we are not alone. Nearly all the prisons and jails that we serve are on lockdown and no volunteers are allowed in. There are a few exceptions, though. Board member Joe Sheehan, for example, has been invited back to Century Correctional Institution to lead one, 6-8 student course. Florida prisons have recorded 134 inmate deaths and 16,421 infections as of September 30.



We thought at first that our “peer” (inmate) facilitators could fill in the gap, but even that is not happening very much. An exception has been reported by FIT trainer Chris Christiansen. Numerous courses, including some in Spanish, are being conducted by multiple peer facilitators at Taylor Correctional Institution because they are all housed in the same dormitory.

The concern that we have at FIT is that, with nearly all of our volunteer workforce idle, we may lose them before things open back up again. Please be assured that we at the office and leadership are doing everything we can to fully service you now and when demand picks up. Though overall income is down slightly, the faithful giving of many has not dropped in spite of the circumstances. Thank you for your continued support and your passion for our mission. We will be here for you.

## Is FIT Evidence Based?

One of the most common questions asked of us is “Is FIT Evidenced Based? The short answer to this is yes, but first let us explain a few things to put things into context. Another way to describe “evidence based” is “scientifically proven through research to be effective”. FIT is also “Bible based” which means it has scriptural content. To some, this means the two cannot coexist. But, for many people, recovery involves a holistic approach where both are involved. Our scriptural component severely limits our access to serve in many ways. Among them:



- We cannot apply for any kind of governmental support and we have to compete for openings with secular programs with huge funding. Fine. We understand that.
- We have to overcome biases that religious people do not practice or observe effective “evidence based” strategies. We do concerning life skills, but some still stay skeptical. Evidence-based research has no empirical measures for theological issues.
- We have to convince doubters that we are a sect trying to take over. We are not. We are a cross-denominational organization promoting Christian values.

Here are two good reasons why we have to be both “evidence based” and “Bible-based”.

1. Most of our clients are in institutions or answer to authorities who will not approve our program unless it is evidence based.
2. We are people of faith and our faith is central to our well-being and recovery. Many people are looking for such an approach.

# Which of the Eight FIT Courses are Evidence Based?

We believe they all are. The seven areas of need according to the 2017 application put out by the Florida Department of Corrections are social awareness, criminal associates, criminal thinking/attitude, family/marital, employment/education, and substance abuse. Please refer to the attached matrix for how our courses fit into these needs. Our writing staff includes four people with doctorates from regionally accredited universities who are well acquainted with research methodologies.



## How do You Lead a FIT Lesson? Let Me Count the Ways

FIT classes have been used in any number of ways. The courses, course order, time frames are all subject to the constraints of the host institutions who will let us in. Here is an unusual but very effective strategy which is being used in Office Manager Betty Drawdy's Sunday School class



where she is teaching Anger Dynamics. Everyone studies the lesson and answers the questions in their books before coming to class. When they get to class, she asks questions that she made up on her own based on the lesson material. She includes the scenarios and scriptures and expects everyone to contribute, which

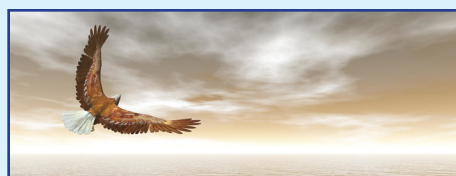


she does successfully. It is not every time that you have the luxury of having people study the lesson ahead of time, but when you do, take advantage of it!

### from the field...

This is Pat Williams in Homestead, Florida. I want to share the rewarding experience that I have had with FIT and the ladies at the Homestead Correctional Institution state prison for women. I have been a facilitator with FIT for many years and want to say that I have seen and experienced the wonderful benefits of sharing this life changing program with many of the ladies. I have had testimonies where some of the ladies have thanked the Lord first and then me for reminding them that there is another way of living life. FIT has helped them to develop the potential of being God-led women and live productive lives for God, for themselves, their families and for society. They come to recognize that God has placed a value on them that though life's circumstances and bad choices may have robbed them of their value, God will never rob them of that value. We all are His prized possession and it's a matter of wanting to turn around and walking away from this world to follow Jesus. I have seen a development and a growth in Christian character, I've seen tears of forgiveness and restoration of relationships, whether with family, spouses and friends. I've seen the hand of God change lives dramatically through His Word. For many it has been a matter of reconciliation with Jesus and turning, for others it has been a brand new experience with God. For me, it has been a rewarding experience and a tremendous privilege to represent Christ and to participate in the enhancement of lives being put together again.

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Pat Williams  
Homestead, FL  
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