Special Issue
On Mentorship: A Tribute to John F. McDermott, Jr., MD

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Welcome to JAACAP Connect!

What is JAACAP Connect?
All are invited! JAACAP Connect is an online companion to the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP), the leading journal focused exclusively on psychiatric research and treatment of children and adolescents. A core mission of JAACAP Connect is to engage trainees and practitioners in the process of lifelong learning via readership, authorship, and publication experiences that emphasize translation of research findings into the clinical practice of child and adolescent psychiatry.

Why do we need JAACAP Connect?
The field of child and adolescent psychiatry is rapidly changing, and translation of scientific literature into clinical practice is a vital skillset that takes years to develop. JAACAP Connect engages clinicians in this process by offering brief articles based on trending observations by peers, and by facilitating development of lifelong learning skills via mentored authorship experiences.

Who reads JAACAP Connect?
All students, trainees, and clinicians who are interested in child and adolescent mental health will benefit from reading JAACAP Connect, available online at www.jaacap.com/content/connect. AACAP members will receive emails announcing new quarterly issues.

Who writes JAACAP Connect?
You do! We seek highly motivated students, trainees, early career, and seasoned clinicians and researchers from all disciplines with compelling observations about child and adolescent psychiatry. We pair authors with mentors when necessary, and work as a team to create the final manuscripts.

What are the content requirements for JAACAP Connect articles?
JAACAP Connect is interested in any topic relevant to pediatric mental health that bridges scientific findings with clinical reality. As evidenced by our first edition, the topic and format can vary widely, from neuroscience to teen music choices.

How can JAACAP Connect help with my educational requirements?
Motivated by the ACGME/ABPN Psychiatry Milestone Project©, JAACAP Connect aims to promote the development of the skillset necessary for translating scientific research into clinical practice. The process of science-based publication creates a vital set of skills that is rarely acquired elsewhere, and models the real-life thought process of translating scientific findings into clinical care. To bring this experience to more trainees and providers, JAACAP Connect aims to enhance mastery of translating scientific findings into clinical reality by encouraging publishing as education.

JAACAP Connect combines education and skill acquisition with mentorship and guidance to offer new experiences in science-based publication. We will work with students, trainees, early career, and seasoned physicians, regardless of previous publication experience, to develop brief science-based and skill-building articles. Opportunities for increasing knowledge and skills through publishing as education will be available through continued contributions and direct involvement with the JAACAP Connect editorial team, using an apprenticeship model.

Start Thinking About Authorship With JAACAP Connect
What trends have you observed that deserve a closer look? Can you envision reframing key research findings into clinical care? Do you want to educate others on a broader scale, thereby improving the health of children around the country, the world? We encourage all levels of practitioners and researchers, from students to attendings, to join in and participate. All are welcome, and you are invited.
Combining Inspiration and Practical Tips to Help Mentees Find Their “Jack”

Michelle S. Horner, DO

Do you have a mentor? Do you want to be a mentor? This issue of JAACAP Connect inspires us to step into mentorship.

Having had mentors at many, but not all, stages of my career, it is almost impossible to imagine a successful career without mentorship. However, I spent most of my formative years, including medical school, not realizing what a mentor was or how they could be helpful. I thought mentorship was only for would-be researchers or the elite few. Now I know with certainty: mentorship is for everyone.

“Mentorship for everyone” has become a mantra in child and adolescent psychiatry (CAP), in no small part due to efforts such as the mentorship programs and career development fora (CDF) at American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) annual meetings. The AACAP mentorship program, first brought to us by Andrés Martin, MD, MPH, has been shown to increase mentees’ knowledge of and connectedness to the field of child and adolescent psychiatry,1-3 and has touched the lives of thousands of participants, including me.

The spring 2016 issue of JAACAP Connect is dedicated to one of our most prolific AACAP mentors, John F. “Jack” McDermott Jr., MD, who died in December 2015. Jack’s mentoring legacy spans generations and continents. Jack was editor-in-chief of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP) from 1988 to 1997 and, in conjunction with Dr. Martin, created the John F. McDermott Assistant Editor-in-Residence (EIR) mentorship program for JAACAP (from which JAACAP Connect was created). Indeed, if we were to create a “pedigree” of the ancestry and lineage of AACAP and JAACAP mentorship programs, all lines would likely incorporate Dr. McDermott and Dr. Martin.

In this issue, Dr. McDermott’s wisdom is imparted to the reader through the writings of multiple generations of his “mentorship descendants.” Part I of this issue focuses on more practical aspects of mentorship. First I discuss how to find and keep a good mentor, using a “how-to” format. Misty Richards, MD, JAACAP Connect deputy editor, continues with tender-hearted yet practical tips for maximizing the mentor–mentee relationship. Oliver Stroeh, MD, current EIR and JAACAP Connect associate editor, helps us overcome “energy barriers” in completing projects by reflecting on our knowledge, skills, and attitudes, building on the “Just Do It!” advice of Dr. Martin published in an early issue of JAACAP Connect.4

Part II of this issue focuses on inspiration, admiration, and tribute. Dr. Martin, JAACAP editor-in-chief, tells us where it all began—the mentor’s mentor, Cap’n Jack McDermott. Next, the inaugural John F. McDermott Assistant EIR and a current assistant editor of JAACAP, Schuyler W. Henderson, MD, MPH, takes us on a poetic journey of what it means to have known Jack as a mentor. When we think of Jack, we can’t help but think of Hawaii, the place he called home. Stacy S. Drury, MD, PhD, former EIR and current JAACAP editorial board member, guides us through mentorship and Jack’s contributions to CAP in Hawaii, explaining Jack’s HO‘OHANOHANO that we strive to exhibit in our own lives (see Stacy’s story for translation). JAACAP’s Alyssa Murphy, MA, and Mary K. Billingsley, ELS, dip into Jack’s diverse scholarly activities by discussing his surprising expertise in Emily Dickinson.
Dr. McDermott embodied the most important attributes of a mentor: he was smart, reflective, accepting, and generous of time and spirit. So how does one find a “Jack”? Read through the articles to find tips and inspiration. Then get involved locally and nationally. Participate in the AACAP mentorship programs. Write for JAACAP Connect. Apply for JAACAP’s mentored editorial positions. Through these experiences, you, too, will become part of the ongoing legacy of Jack McDermott, MD.

References

Interested in Authorship?
Contact us at connect@jaacap.org
We will discuss your topic of interest, work with you (no previous publication experience required), and pair you with a mentor in your area of interest, as necessary.
Learn with us and advance your skills through guided publication.

Interested in Mentoring?
In addition to partnership with JAACAP Connect editorial staff, many authors are paired with seasoned mentors who review the content of the article and serve as a supervising author. Please contact us at connect@jaacap.org to become part of the JAACAP Connect community of learning.
SAVE THE DATES!

New Research Poster Submission Deadline: 
June 15, 2016

Book Hotel and View Preliminary Program: 
June 15, 2016

AACAP Member Registration Opens Online: 
August 1, 2016

General Registration Opens Online: 
August 8, 2016

Visit www.aacap.org/AnnualMeeting/2016 for the latest Annual Meeting Information!
How to Find and Keep a Good Mentor

Michelle S. Horner, DO

The Case of the Missing Mentor(s): Lindsey is a new resident in a community psychiatry program. She would like to become a child and adolescent psychiatrist, but her training in child psychiatry will be minimal and deferred to the fourth training year. Her program director is great but has limited information on child fellowships. Lindsey has also developed an interest in childhood obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and wonders how she could learn more about research in the area, but she doesn’t know where to start.

Every physician benefits from having a mentor (or two or three). However, mentorship, like any relationship, can be a funny thing. You can search your whole life and never really connect with a mentor. Or, you can be lucky and find the ideal mentor early in your career, then long to recreate that experience. Finding a true connection takes much more than luck, and this article provides the tools for finding and keeping a good mentor.

Does Everyone Need a Mentor?
Yes, everyone needs a mentor. We all have much to learn, and we all need guidance to improve our chances of success. Think back: Is there anything you wish you had known when you first started medical school? Residency? Early career? Good mentors help limit that “wish I had known” feeling through imparting their knowledge and experience in a proactive fashion. Mentors help guide us, help us overcome.

Mentors keep us focused on the prize. Not sure what “the prize” is? A good mentor can help by facilitating introspection. See Table 1 for commonly used terms.

What Is a Mentor?
The name “mentor” once referred to a person, the advisor of Telemachus. Today, the term represents a concept, an aspiration, and a belief: a belief that by partnering together in a shared goal, anything can happen. Good mentors, above all, are kind and trusted guides. They help us reflect upon what is important today so we may balance short-term options with longer-term ambitions.

There will be many teachers, advisors, and friends that influence your decisions and success. What qualifies as mentorship?

- Mentorship is a dyadic relationship whose mutual goal is advancing the mentee
- Mentorship involves mutual respect and listening
- Mentors feel an inner sense of duty to help the mentees succeed
- Mentors guide and nudge mentees to discover their passions and reach their potential
- Mentees seek guidance and are willing to listen and explore ideas
- Mentees receive, process, reflect, and dialogue

Table 1. Terms About Mentorship in the Medical Field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Term used to specify tasks with effort involved; usually reviewed at the end of the meeting to ensure consensus on the plan.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentee</td>
<td>Although the best mentorships are mutually beneficial, the term “mentee” generally refers to the junior person, the person receiving guidance. Mentees are seeking guidance and want to be part of something more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>In medicine, mentors typically have advanced skills and knowledge, and use these skills to help a more junior individual in various aspects of career-building. Mentors want to provide guidance to help others obtain more for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>The dyadic process/exchange that occurs between a mentor and mentee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentors</td>
<td>Individuals at a similar stage of training who are often able to offer practical advice on day-to-day details. Peer mentors like to share and learn tips along the way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Find and Keep a Good Mentor

Magical moments of mentorship will happen throughout your lifetime; watch for them. For example, a sage conference-goer may offer some gems that, upon reflection, advance your research question in new directions. A peer may take a moment to provide tips on work–life balance, then check from time to time to see if you need a hand. Although these aren’t “meet every Tuesday at 12” mentors, the impact can be just as important.

When Is a Relationship NOT Mentorship?

“Real life” mentorships are rarely perfect, but almost all mentors are trying their best. Sometimes, however, a person may appear to be offering mentorship, but their agenda is personal, and the goals of the mentee do not come into consideration. This is more common with employment or when mentorship opportunities are limited. Also, teachers and attendings are not inherently mentors, although they will likely provide mentorship moments. The primary goal of mentorship is to advance the success of the mentee.

Three Potential Mentorship Styles

As suggested above, we must first recognize that a mentor isn’t merely a person, but also a concept. Indeed, the root word mentos means “intent, purpose, spirit, passion” in Greek. In fact, the ultimate goal of mentorship is to help mentees determine and meet their career goals.

As such, it is helpful to consider three core types of mentorship that physicians typically need to help determine and meet their goals: “Big Picture,” “Topic Specific,” and “Peer” mentorships (see Figure 1). Mentees gather information from all three mentorship types and integrate the information to advance their careers. Rarely, all three types can be provided by one mentor; more typically, multiple mentors are required.

The following describes the three core areas of mentorship in psychiatry and their purposes, topic scopes, and tips for finding them and making the most of the experience. Although every mentorship relationship is unique, general guidelines can be helpful. The ultimate goal is to have mentorship that covers these core areas.

Big Picture Mentorship
(Provided by Program Directors, Division Chiefs, Chairs)

Purpose: Helps mentees discover and develop their career intent, purpose, spirit, and passion. Keeps mentees on track with stated goals. Redirects mentees when they are going astray from stated goals. Often helps guide career choices and writes recommendation letters for employment. Nominates mentees for awards and introduces mentees to leaders at the local and national level.

Acceptable Topics: First, focus on determining career goals, then segue into deciding which opportunities help advance career goals. New opportunities and networking should be frequent discussions. Awards, trainings, leadership positions.

How to Find: Start with your program director, division chief, or chair. They can either become one of your Big Picture mentors or direct you to someone who can help.

Tips: Start off with monthly meetings and schedule them several months in advance. Meetings will be...
less frequent once you establish your goals. Many successful individuals keep their Big Picture mentors for many years and build a personal “advisory panel.” For each meeting, provide a basic agenda (see Table 2) but leave plenty of time for open discussion. Ask for opportunities. Do not waste time on matters better suited for immediate supervisors unless they are having an impact upon completion of your goals.

**Topic-Specific Mentorship**  
*(Provided by Researchers, Academics, Experts)*

**Purpose:** Specialist in a topic area. Helps mentee create goals and carve out projects/advance plans in that topic area.

**Acceptable Topics:** Any project/question related to the mentor’s expertise. Career goals related to that topic. Conferences, posters, papers, trainings, grants, travel awards related to the topic.

**How to Find:** Ask your “Big Picture” mentor, program directors, division chiefs, chairs. Browse your institution’s website for faculty and their areas of expertise. Search research web pages (e.g., Researchgate, Google Scholar Profile).

**Tips:** Weekly meetings to start. Provide a detailed agenda (see below) and stick to it. Go with the flow. Sometimes projects won’t match your goals exactly, especially at first. This is expected. Learn what you can from each project, then move on as you refine your interests. Most people only have one primary topic-specific mentor at any one time; additional mentors would be for smaller projects (like JAACAP Connect articles).

**Peer Mentorship**  
*(Provided by Colleagues, Contemporaries)*

**Purpose:** To guide with smaller tasks and issues that influence your career goals but are relatively simple, basic skill-building, or controversial, or challenging to discuss with an advanced mentor.

**Acceptable Topics:** Basic skill-building, general questions about career and family. Personal questions about work–life balance that may not seem ideal for other mentors.

**How to Find:** Socializing with individuals close to your career stage. Make efforts to attend lectures, social hours, and conferences (e.g., AACAP, ROCAP). Often times great peer mentors are “one step” ahead in that topic (e.g., they just completed a fellowship and you are about to apply; they have a one-year-old and you are pregnant). Peers can be local, national, or international. Emails, calls, or personal meetings can be appropriate.

**Tips:** The definition of “peers” varies widely, and at this stage is based on the topic or career level. Discussions are usually informal and friendly. The goal is professional kinship and mutual advancement. Basic skills (including coping skills) are often learned through peer mentorship, and agendas are simple or not utilized.

**Finding a Good Mentor**

Most mentorships can be worthwhile with the right amount of time and effort. “Good” (a.k.a. dedicated) mentors are highly sought after and often hard to find. Since it is only possible to mentor a few trainees at a time, first impressions are important. It is good to spend time researching suggested mentor names, talking to peers who know the mentors, and preparing for first meetings. Many mentors will expect that you are somewhat familiar with their careers and previous publications, which are easily searchable on Google Scholar, ResearchGate, faculty pages, etc. Be prepared to discuss your short- and long-term goals, desired outcomes (projects, requests), and expectations you have of the mentor and the mentorship plan.

It is acceptable to meet with several mentors to determine goodness-of-fit, especially since one mentor can rarely provide all the core mentorship types described above. Some mentors are flexible and relaxed; others are serious and demand a high level of organization. Some mentors have expertise in your area of interest yet have little time to offer; other mentors are willing to meet weekly but may have few overlapping interests. Each mentorship is unique, so be open-minded to the possibilities, as all mentors have experience to share.

**Tip:** To maximize success, search for mentors with geographical proximity (down the hall is best!). Strive to meet in person each time. Avoid cancellations and
rescheduling. Never “no show.” Remember that each part of the mentorship team has expectations; failure to meet these expectations on a regular basis often results in relationship strain.

**Keeping a Good Mentor**

Finding a good mentor is the easier part. Keeping a good mentor takes time, effort, and commitment. In any relationship, the potential for greatness is possible when two like-minded people meet. However, somewhat specific to mentorship is that the mentee is in the driver’s seat. The progression of the mentorship is ultimately up to the mentee’s ability to properly (and repeatedly) access the mentor as a resource, and to do so with respect and agility (see Table 2).

Every mentor will have a skillset, preferences, and expectations. Over time, the mentee will learn how to best access the mentor’s knowledge and skills in a manner that is mutually beneficial. Organization, professionalism, and delivering on promises are all fundamentally important.

Setting goals, creating timelines for the goals, and using meeting agendas are helpful approaches for staying organized. Recognize that complex careers require multiple mentors. Understand that career goals and mentors often change over time. Understanding and flexibility are important traits for mentor and mentee; however, good organizational and communication skills can limit the need for forgiveness.

Remember, good mentors are trusted guides, and they want to help. If you are struggling in your career or the

| TABLE 2. COMMON TASKS AND THE EXPECTED ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS OF GOOD MENTORS AND MENTEES |
|---|---|---|
| TASK | A GOOD MENTOR: | A GOOD MENTEE: |
| Meetings | Is available, is prepared if given time. Helps mentee stick to planned agenda. | Always arrives on time; sends a reminder 24 hours in advance; sends an agenda 48 hours in advance; sends all documents 1+ weeks in advance. |
| Correspondence | Replies in a timely fashion to mentee emails. Facilitates introductions. | Initiates emails. Replies in a timely fashion (24 hours). Resends emails if mentor doesn’t reply in 48 hours. |
| Setting Goals/Outcomes | Helps mentee set goals and decide planned outcomes (projects, awards, grants). Helps mentee create a realistic timeline based on mentee’s goals and outcomes. Reminds mentee to keep on track; helps mentee when problems arise. | Picks realistic goals. Sticks to the timeline. Asks for guidance if the goals and timeline are too ambitious. |
| Due Dates/Deliverables | Is aware of all requirements and due dates related to shared projects and guides mentee to success. | Informs mentor of all requirements and due dates related to shared project. Completes all projects on time. Seeks help when obstacles arise. |
| Overarching Goal | Seeks the professional and personal success of the mentee and to increase skills, self-esteem, confidence. | Seeks the professional and personal success of the mentee and to increase skills, self-esteem, confidence. |
mentorship, try this: “I want to be better at [insert skill here]. Could you provide suggestions for improvement?”

**Tip:** Time is valuable; a brief agenda can be helpful, particularly for new relationships or for outcome-focused mentorships. The purpose of the agenda is to help maximize mentorship time and prepare the mentor for expectations. Agendas are sent at least 48 hours in advance to all meeting attendees. When creating an agenda, include the meeting information. The first agenda item is the “check-in” period that focuses on relationship-building and reviewing previous action items. Next, new items are discussed. Leave time to determine action items and plan due dates. The remaining time is open discussion. If your agenda includes requests that involve the mentor’s time (e.g., requested reviews or information), be sure to provide the due date and send drafts at least 1-2 weeks in advance. Use highlights and asterisks for items requiring review/response before the meeting. Figure 2 provides a sample agenda for topic-specific mentorship.

**Finding the “Missing Mentor”**

Lindsey’s case (above) details a typical scenario: mentorship is needed, but “the perfect mentor” isn’t obvious or geographically convenient. How should someone like Lindsey proceed? First, read the articles in this issue of *JAACAP Connect* to gain inspiration and practical tips. Then, talk to program and division directors and chairs to describe (or determine) what kind of mentorship is desired. To find local mentors, use the resources at the end of this article to reach out to mentorship programs within regional CAP organizations or AACAP. Access mentorship at the national level by attending AACAP meetings and participating in activities designed for medical students, residents, and early career psychiatrists. These include the AACAP mentorship and career development programs, inspirational talks, and many other networking and educational experiences available for multiple stages of career development such as skill-building workshops offered at AACAP Annual Meetings.

**Table 3. Example of a Brief Agenda for Mentorship Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda for Meeting with Michelle: July 4, 2017, 1-2pm in Dr. Mentor’s office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Check-in</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Discuss progress on action items from last meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. (Michelle) Complete first draft specific aims for <em>JAACAP Connect</em> article (attached in this email, please review for next week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. (Michelle) Email Dr. Wise to add as mentor to article (“he said he is too busy, do you have a second option for me?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Discuss poster project ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. (Dr. Mentor) Determine if OCD database will be ready in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Decide on final topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>New items</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. AACAP Pilot Award: Due March 15, 2018 (provide URL or attach description).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Letter of Recommendation request for fellowship program <strong>Due August 4th (CV attached)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Review action items for next meeting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Open discussion</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions**

Medical careers are complex, and mentorship increases success. Accessing mentorship on “big picture” issues, “topic-specific” projects, and “peer-related” matters provides an integrated approach for career advancement. Find mentors by accessing resources; keep mentors by demonstrating organizational skills, professionalism, and, above all, kindness.

When a mentor–mentee relationship forms, that moment in time is unique and can never be duplicated. As with many relationships, we don’t realize how irreplaceable a mentor is until the relationship is gone. So start looking around for your next mentor. Being prepared, flexible, and introspective helps; success occurs when we are true to ourselves, cherish each experience, learn from mistakes, and pay it forward by mentoring others.
About the Author

Michelle S. Horner, DO, is assistant professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins Medicine. She is the editor-in-chief and founder of JAACAP Connect, which provides mentorship for authorship and editor experiences. She has published data-driven papers on mentorship and has been involved with AACAP’s mentorship programs for many years, including founding AACAP’s Career Development Forum.

Disclosure: Dr. Horner has received grant or research support from the National Institute on Drug Abuse – American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry K Award and Johns Hopkins Medicine pilot funding.

Take Home Summary
- Mentorship is essential for career development.
- At the end of the day, mentor and mentee are equally responsible for finding each other and for fostering and maintaining the mentorship.
- Access tips to improve chances for success.

Resources
- AACAP Mentorship Network
  http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Medical_Students_and_Residents/Mentorship_Matters/AACAP_Mentorship_Network.aspx
- Medical Students Awards
  http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Awards/Medical_Students_Awards/Home.aspx
- Resident and Early Career Psychiatrists Awards
  http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Awards/Resident_and_ECP_Awards/Awards_RECP_Home.aspx
- AACAP Regional Organizations
  http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Regional_Organizations/Home.aspx
- AACAP Life Members Mentorship Grants for Medical Students
  https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Awards/Medical_Students_Awards/Life_Members_Mentorship_Grants.aspx

How to Find and Keep a Good Mentor

JAACAP June Issue — Available Now!

When Sir Edwin Henry Landseer memorialized the subject of his 1838 portrait A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society, he made sure to capture the sitter’s commanding presence. Renowned for the number of people he saved from drowning in the Thames (23 over 14 years), the sitter, a Newfoundland named Bob, exudes the same gravitas as any respected human member of society. But the utility of man’s best friend is not limited to rescuing poor swimmers: this month’s Clinical Perspective, “The Transformative Power of the Dog: The Growing Use of Canine Assistants in Therapeutic Interventions and School Settings,” explores the particular ways that human–canine interactions benefit adolescents’ mental wellbeing. The arguments for incorporating animals into certain areas of psychiatric treatment are gaining ground; just last year this page highlighted an article exploring the efficacy of equine therapy for youth with autism, “Randomized Controlled Trial of Therapeutic Horseback Riding in Children and Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder.” Indeed, animals are proving to be valuable adjuncts to mental health treatment. It remains to be seen, however, whether a descendent of Landseer’s “distinguished member of the Humane Society” could ever hold a similar place of recognition within our own Academy...
IACAPAP 2016
Fighting Stigma: Promoting Resiliency and Positive Mental Health

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36th Annual Conference for the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CACAP)

September 18-22, 2016 | Calgary TELUS Convention Centre | Calgary, Alberta, Canada

“As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being”

– C. G. Jung

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Maximizing Time and Expectations in the Mentor–Mentee Relationship: 10 Tips to Guide Your Journey

Misty Richards, MD

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.

–Benjamin Franklin

On the road to becoming seasoned child and adolescent psychiatrists, a good goal is to end up in the fast lane. This lane is generally furthest from the entry point and takes several lane changes before becoming a reality. The fast lane is often considered the smoothest, most effective, and the most fun! The goal is not to necessarily drive fast, but to merge into a streamlined lane you know will get you where you need to go.

In this light, a mentor is your co-pilot, your wingman, your passenger. They check your blind spot, gently guide you while you pick up speed to merge, and hopefully leave you with the confidence you need to drive independently. They can tell you to turn on your signal, teach you to use your mirrors, but most importantly, they can empower you to have confidence in your direction of travel.

For many, Dr. Jack McDermott—or Captain Jack—was the ultimate wingman. He empowered those around him to utilize their talents to reach for their dreams. He made a career of this, really, and inspired many powerhouse leaders in child and adolescent psychiatry to ignore boundaries so that they may embrace their personal and professional callings. While I did not have the pleasure of knowing Dr. McDermott personally, I have benefited from his mentees, who have paid it forward. In a serendipitous manner, I have worked with Drs. Andrés Martin, Michelle Horner, and Stacy Drury—all on separate projects—and each has mentored me in different capacities that have played an integral role in my development. I am grateful to each of these individuals for their guidance and encouragement and am especially appreciative to Dr. McDermott for catalyzing what seems to be a movement of movers and shakers.

How is it that one word—mentorship—can mean so much to so many? Once you find a suitable mentor, what do you do as a mentee to make this relationship come alive? I remember asking myself these questions over 15 years ago, when I met one of my first mentors, Dr. Lori Altsuler, while an undergraduate at UCLA. She was everything I wanted to be—an accomplished psychiatrist, a caring mother, a well-respected researcher. How was I to make this relationship blossom? I will never forget my first meeting with Dr. Altsuler, who invited me into her corner office and poured me a cup of coffee. While I was anxious and ruminating about the potential career questions she could grill me on, she sat there calmly and asked me about my family, my interests, my dreams. We laughed over funny stories, and she remained present for the entire 60-minute meeting she carved out of her incredibly busy schedule. She asked if she could be my passenger on my professional (and what became personal) journey. Through this relationship with one of my first mentors, I truly understood the profound meaning of the word mentorship.

Here is my advice for maximizing the time and expectations shared in the mentor–mentee relationship to make it meaningful to you (outlined in 10 steps):

1. Identify mutual goals and expectations in the beginning
   This conversation is tremendously useful in selecting a mentor. Have a frank discussion of expectations from the beginning, identifying how frequently you will meet in person and communicate via email/phone. Will this mentor be someone you can freely email/call? Will they...
be able to meet once a month or once a year? Be sure to keep this discussion two-way, as the best mentor–mentee relationships are reciprocal. You may gain a wealth of knowledge and opportunity while they may be inspired by your enthusiasm and passion for the field.

2. **Understand your personal goals**
Remember, you are in the driver’s seat, and you control the vehicle. Do a personal inventory and identify some important career goals for yourself. Even if you are unsure, having a general idea will be much more helpful in engaging your chosen mentor. Of course, these goals are allowed to be dynamic and changing, but you will be much more satisfied if you have articulated as clear a picture as possible from the beginning.

3. **Be honest to your mentor and to yourself**
It can be intimidating to work closely with a leader in your field. You may be tempted to agree to commitments/opportunities that may not interest or benefit you. Do not be afraid to speak up and communicate your opinion to your mentor. Be honest. This honesty may lay the foundation for the respect you need to be viewed as their peer someday.

4. **Set an agenda (that is not exhaustive)**
You do not have to be a drill sergeant, but setting an agenda for each meeting will produce results. This gives you and your mentor time to prepare for each topic so that discussion can be more high-yield. Your mentor will likely have multiple commitments and may not have the time (or interest) to do this. It shows initiative if you can produce a reasonable agenda to be sent to them prior to meeting.

5. **Be professional**
Show up on time (or early and wait), be respectful of the allotted time, and keep discussions confidential. This commitment to a safe environment will ultimately facilitate brave discussions that may pave the way for bold discoveries. Unwavering commitment to the above will undoubtedly create mutual trust. Perhaps most importantly, remember to be appreciative.

6. **Welcome constructive criticism**
This is the holy grail of mentoring. This demonstrates that your mentor has taken the time to be thoughtful and trusts that you will welcome targeted comments to areas needing improvement. As hard as it may be to hear, write the comments down, read them again when you are by yourself, and try to find their worth. Listen carefully with the goal of making reasonable adjustments to improve the final product. Sometimes mentors can see pitfalls to which we are blind, as their perspectives are often shaped by years of experience.

7. **Good communication**
Similar to working on an interdisciplinary team, communication is the backbone of productivity. Check in with your mentor via an agreeable and mutually beneficial form of communication within a reasonable amount of time. Stick to the facts and report back on your progress (or lack thereof). Understand that mentors are often very busy (potentially with other mentees) and remind them of where you last left off. If you can effectively apprise (ahem, remind) them of progress, this will make their lives easier and allow you to hit the ground running with their guidance.

8. **Accountability**
This goes both ways. If you commit to a project and set a deadline, do it. Of course, if there is a good reason why this is not possible, refer to #7 and effectively communicate this to your reasonable mentor. Similarly, if your mentor commits to meeting or working on a project with you, it is fair to hold them accountable (respectfully, of course). It is critical that you take ownership of your commitments, especially when they involve professional deadlines.

9. **Bridges are not meant to be burned**
Should the mentor–mentee relationship go awry, understand that this happens and resist placing too much blame on one particular person or incident. If you have to move on to a different mentor (and you may have many, depending on your interests), please do so in a way that demonstrates integrity, mutual respect, and dignity. If
this becomes challenging to do, understand that there are unbiased, safe, workplace mediators who can help. Please do not hesitate to utilize them for solid advice.

10. Utilize the power of observation

You approached this person to be a mentor for a reason. Something about their professional or personal life appealed to you. Work to identify these qualities, as they often provide some guidance in how you want to live your life. Are they incredibly productive? Do they laugh often and seem to enjoy what they do? Do they model work–life balance well? Be aware of what you observe and make a mental note; sometimes actions speak louder than words.

The profound connection shared between a mentor and mentee can come alive via multiple paths. The 10 steps listed above are meant as an initial guide to help you maximize time and expectations with your chosen mentor. In the end, you want this person to help you merge into your fastest lane, something that may seem challenging to do without experienced eyes. Before you know it, and if all goes well, you will be able to sit back, relax, and enjoy the wild ride to becoming a seasoned child and adolescent psychiatrist.

In loving memory of Dr. Lori Lynn Altshuler (1957-2015) and Dr. John F. McDermott (1929-2015).

Take Home Summary

- Maximize the time and expectations shared in the mentor–mentee relationship by making it meaningful to you.
- Identify mutual goals and expectations in the beginning, as this sets the pace.
- Practice good, effective, direct communication and welcome the gift of constructive criticism.
- The profound connection between a mentor and mentee can come alive via multiple paths. Try to work with someone who lives the lifestyle you have always envisioned for yourself.

About the Author

Misty Richards, MD, MS, is a first-year child and adolescent psychiatry fellow at UCLA. She is the former editor-in-chief of the American Journal of Psychiatry–Residents’ Journal and a current deputy editor of JAACAP Connect. She is interested in mood disorders in transitional age youth as well as college mental health.

Disclosure: Dr. Richards reports no biomedical financial interests or potential conflicts of interest.

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I have a specific kind of writer’s block that, harkening back to high school chemistry, I call my “energy barrier.” This label is not a term of endearment, nor does it refer to an absence of ideas or a lack of inspiration or motivation. Instead, it refers to the entangled emotional and psychological hang-ups (what many might appropriately call neuroses) that block my ability to let flow my thoughts and ideas onto paper (or screen). And I am aware that “it”—the barrier—isn’t some external entity. It is me. Which makes it seem all the more frustrating and paralyzing. My typical writing “process” is one that begins with an extended period of apparent inactivity frequently misperceived as procrastination or avoidance. (In actuality, it is consumed by not-so-effective activity: preoccupation and obsession.) This period is then followed by a relative moment of frenzy, often dominated by anxiety and fear as a deadline looms overhead. The cumulative alarm manages transiently to push aside my neuroses enough to allow me to ride the rollercoaster of panic over the hump of my energy barrier, all the while feeling that control could be lost at any moment and that I might careen off the track and plummet towards failure. Once the written piece has been submitted and the deadline has passed, I am left exhausted, but also uncomfortable. I am proud of the piece I created and enjoy a sense of accomplishment, but am embarrassed by the road I travelled to get there. The production of this piece has not been an exception to my rule. To highlight a quote from Dorothy Parker that is featured by Andrés Martin, MD, MPH, in a JAACAP Connect article encouraging authorship and publication, “I hate writing, I love having written.”

In large part because of this energy barrier of mine, along with a recognition of similar energy barriers in colleagues and trainees, I was drawn to JAACAP Connect. Michelle Horner, DO—founder and current editor-in-chief of JAACAP Connect and my predecessor as John F. McDermott Assistant Editor-in-Residence at JAACAP—established JAACAP Connect with the goal of making authorship and publication accessible to more people, including trainees and early career psychiatrists (ECPs). In particular, Michelle recognized the provision of a mentored authorship experience as a means through which to do so. The fact that JAACAP Connect has published eight issues to date, featuring articles written by first-time authors (many trainees or ECPs), speaks to the success of this targeted strategy. But, Michelle and I recognize a need to optimize the mentorship experience so as to make authorship and publication even more accessible to a wider array of would-be authors.

Over the course of my first few months as the John F. McDermott Assistant EIR and through working with Michelle on JAACAP Connect, we have encountered many trainees and ECPs who express genuine interest in submitting an article for JAACAP Connect, but who—after an energized and enthusiastic initial phone call—retreat from contact, sometimes never to be heard from again. These bright and thoughtful individuals had shared terrific ideas that deserve to be heard and read. So, what happened to them? For some, it may have been limited resources (e.g., time) that caused them to turn away from the opportunity. However, I suspect that, for most, the retreat was for a different reason. I venture that the majority of those potential authors we are losing are those who, like me, struggle with energy barriers that have to do with their stances—their personal attitudes—towards authorship and publication. When undertaking a writing project, these stances and attitudes are often overlooked by would-be authors and mentors, alike.
The Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Model

With the goals of providing circumspect or reluctant authors-to-be a more structured and comprehensive mentorship experience and of increasing the likelihood of their authorship and publication, I propose the application to mentorship of an educational model with which I have become familiar in my role in residency training and education. In his 1949 book *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, Ralph Tyler proposes as one of his principle tenets the value of establishing learning objectives. Building on Tyler’s work, Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues posit that any learning objective can be classified as targeting one of three domains of learning: knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

Knowledge-based learning objectives deal with the expansion of knowledge and the development of intellectual ability. Skills-based learning objectives relate to the development of an ability to carry out a task. And the attitude-based learning objectives address the emotional manner with which the learner approaches a particular topic. Educators frequently refer to the aggregate of Bloom’s three learning objective classes as the KSA model (Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes). See Table 1.

Many medical educators have recognized the utility of the KSA model in education and training, including to measure the effectiveness of mentoring that occurs between medical residents and attendings, and to structure and assess the supervision of psychotherapy. Individuals who would like to write and publish can also make use of the KSA model, thinking through the three domains as they pertain to authorship and publication and structuring mentorship to address any identified vulnerabilities and energy barriers.

Where Is Your Biggest Energy Barrier? K, S, or A?

As an aspiring author considers writing a piece for potential publication, he or she—preferably along with his or her mentor—can use the KSA model as an assessment tool to identify domains of both preparedness and vulnerability. Author and mentor can think through each of the domains and ask the following questions:

1. What knowledge regarding authorship and publication do I need to possess to write an article and bring it to publication? What knowledge do I have?
2. What skills regarding authorship and publication do I need to possess to write an article and bring it to publication? What skills do I have?
3. What attitudes regarding authorship and publication do I need to possess to write an article and bring it to publication? What attitudes do I have?

Though by no means exhaustive, some KSAs germane to authorship and publication are outlined in Table 2.

By thinking about the questions outlined above, and others that arise in discussing the project, potential authors (and their mentors) can take inventory of relative strengths and weaknesses in all three domains and identify any gaps that may exist between the authors’ current abilities and those identified as necessary to write and publish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING DOMAIN</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION/CHARACTERIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge (a.k.a. Cognitive)</td>
<td>Pertains to the expansion of knowledge and the development of intellectual ability. Includes the recall or recognition of facts, procedural patterns, and concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills (a.k.a. Psychomotor)</td>
<td>Relates to the development of an ability to carry out a task, frequently through practice. Often is assessed through such parameters as speed, precision, procedures, or technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes (a.k.a. Affective)</td>
<td>Addresses the emotional manner with which the learner approaches a particular topic. Includes the learner’s feelings, values, motivations, and attitudes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Some Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSAs) of Authorship and Publication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING DOMAIN</th>
<th>EXAMPLES PERTINENT TO WRITING AND PUBLISHING</th>
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| Knowledge (a.k.a. Cognitive) | - Knowledge regarding the topic about which one is writing  
  - What do I know about this topic? What do I need to know to write about this topic, and where are the gaps in my knowledge? How will I go about obtaining this information?  
  - Understanding of the processes by which to structure and write a cohesive piece  
  - What is the nature of this paper (essay, original article, review, etc.)? How are these papers structured? What is each part of the structure for (framing the relevance and validity of the question in the introduction, etc.)?  
  - Recognition of the steps of the editing process required to bring a piece to publication  
  - Where do I want to publish this? What is the process for publication? What do the author guidelines say?  
  - Familiarity with ethical practices in research and publication  
  - What does it mean to be an ethical author? What are the ethical issues that I know might arise? What other ones might arise? Who is going to be an author on this, and what is the authorship order? |
| Skills (a.k.a. Psychomotor)   | - Research skills  
  - How do I conduct a comprehensive systematic literature review? What other research skills will I need to develop? Do I have a librarian to work with and, if so, how/when will I have access to him/her?  
  - Writing skills  
  - How will I engage the reader? How will I communicate the importance of the question I am addressing? How will I convey a message clearly and eloquently? How will I develop an argument/point of view over the course of a paper?  
  - Skills receiving feedback  
  - How will I maneuver the complexities of receiving, incorporating, and/or responding to editorial feedback? |
| Attitudes (a.k.a. Affective)  | - Confidence that one has something of value to share with a reader  
  - How is this an important topic for me? How is it important for others?  
  - A balance of self-assuredness and humility as one presents to editors and public/expert audiences a piece for review and scrutiny  
  - How will I accept criticism and use it to improve this? How can I recognize how the editorial process and the associated feedback (including, potentially, rejection) are means to develop further knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding authorship and publication?  
  - A commitment to ethical authorship and publication  
  - How do I want to handle the ethical issues that I know might arise? |

Potential benefits for those authors and mentors who do such an assessment exercise together include (1) the early joint acknowledgement of all three domains as important to successful authorship and publication, (2) potential greater comfort and safety within the mentorship relationship (which might become particularly important should further discussion regarding more sensitive topics [e.g., the domain of attitudes] be needed), and (3) the mentor’s greater awareness of and sensitivity towards any unique potential energy barriers in the author (particularly if such energy barriers were never part of the mentor’s own experience with writing and publishing).
Using the KSA Model to Design the Mentorship Experience and Draft the Publishable Product

After applying the KSA model to assess for potential strengths and vulnerabilities regarding authorship and publication, authors and mentors can use the gaps identified in any KSA domain to define related specific and appropriate learning objectives. For instance, if a timid author-to-be and his mentor determine that he struggles with an attitudinal energy barrier related to his self-consciousness and perfectionism around putting thoughts on paper for others to read, an appropriate objective might be the following: “I will feel more comfortable presenting my written thoughts on paper for others to read, as evidenced by my ability to write more expeditiously with limited self-censorship and less initial attention to editing.”

Then, through “backwards design,” the potential author and his mentor can use the identified desired outcome to plan the content and experiences of mentorship. In the example above, the author and mentor might discuss the author’s fears in greater detail and identify cognitive strategies that he might use when he begins to question his writing. They might also design exercises in which the author must draft in a limited time period a written piece about a specified topic and then share the piece with his mentor at first, but then with an ever-expanding circle of contacts. In a slightly less behavioral approach, the author and mentor may recognize the utility of multiple step-specific deadlines (breaking the larger task into more manageable pieces) and regular check-ins regarding progress made towards such deadlines (increasing accountability to self and others).

Through a planful approach using the KSA model, the author and mentor together can structure a comprehensive and individualized mentorship experience.

Take Home Summary

- Use the KSA model to systematically take stock of your knowledge, skills, and attitudes as they pertain to authorship and publication. Be honest with yourself.
- Strongly consider doing the KSA-based self-assessment with your mentor. Be honest with your mentor.
- Use the results of your KSA-based self-assessment to design an individualized comprehensive mentorship experience with specific exercises and strategies tailored to target your vulnerabilities and “energy barriers.”
- Do not neglect the A of KSA—especially if you are a timid or reluctant author-to-be. Your attitudes regarding writing and publishing warrant the deliberate attentions of both you and your mentor and, if left unchecked, may undermine your efforts.

An Acknowledgement

Although I unfortunately never had the opportunity to meet Jack McDermott in person, I am incredibly grateful to him. The eponymous Assistant Editor-in-Residence position with JAACAP that I am so privileged to hold exists because of Jack’s dedication both to mentorship and to helping people overcome their own barriers. Furthermore, I recognize that I have the invaluable opportunity to experience Jack and benefit from his warmth and wisdom through my relationships with those whom he mentored, including the John F. McDermott Assistant Editors-in-Residence who preceded me, Andrés Martin, and the larger JAACAP family.

References


About the Author

Oliver M. Stroeh, MD, is the John F. McDermott Assistant Editor-in-Residence with JAACAP and is associate editor of JAACAP Connect. He is the Clarice Kestenbaum, MD Assistant Professor of Education and Training in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. He is also associate director of the New York-Presbyterian Hospital Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency Training Program of Columbia and Cornell Universities.

Disclosure: Dr. Stroeh reports no biomedical financial interests or potential conflicts of interest.

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European Capital of Culture 2016
Fare Thee Well, Cap’n Jack: An Editor Salutes His Predecessor
Andrés Martin, MD, MPH

In the last months of his life, Dad latched on at one point to the metaphor of himself as a lighthouse, acknowledging perhaps that he was entering a final, more grounded stage of his life. It wasn’t that he imagined himself holding the light. It was that he felt he had seen where so many of the rocks and hazards were. He wanted most to help guide us all, through the storms that can roil the mind, the dangers we may encounter.

–Elizabeth McDermott: Eulogy, January 10, 2016

I first met Jack McDermott a decade ago. I had heard of the man, of course, but never met him, so when applying for the editorship of JAACAP, I reached out to the illustrious former editor and set up a time to speak. The time difference with Hawaii made our first call even more exciting and mystifying: I was, after all, seeking the advice of a storied sage on distant shores. But as soon as we began speaking, the mists and mysteries evaporated. The old master was responsive, interested, kind, attentive, and witty. A new friendship was instantly born.

From those first days, most of what he shared about the Journal proved to be helpful and on point. Even when my experience didn’t right away resonate with his, I found comfort in knowing I stood in good company, as when I faced a bruising reappointment five years later: “The Academy loves its Journal,” he told me, “but addressing its leadership can feel like walking up the gallows. Mel Lewis warned me of as much. You heard it here first.”

We were both connected to the Journal’s history and past, but it was around its future that our collaboration really took off. Within days of being appointed editor-elect, I ran by Jack the idea of creating a new position for editors-in-training. He jumped at the notion and within a few short months, just as I was learning the ropes, we were able to roll out and fund through philanthropic support the John F. McDermott Assistant Editor-in-Residence position. We both took enormous pride in knowing that this joint venture had been the very first project by the Journal’s sixth editor—in close collaboration with its fourth. Jack and I pored over the many applications we received and struggled with narrowing and finalizing our decisions. We were star-struck by the talent we identified, and developed meaningful and close personal relationships with each of the first three incumbents, Schuyler W. Henderson, Stacy S. Drury, and Michelle S. Horner. He was instrumental in helping select the fourth, Oliver M. Stroeh, but Jack’s untimely passing did not permit their collaboration to flourish.

The assistant editorship took off under Jack. He reveled in collaborating with colleagues this young, bright, and energetic. His excitement was palpable. He found in Schuyler a scholar and wordsmith as fine as himself; he helped Michelle develop JAACAP Connect, on which pages this and other tributes are now published. In bringing Stacy together with the late E. James Anthony, he connected disparate generations of child psychiatrists, making a seemingly unlikely pairing seem in retrospect obvious, scientifically synergistic, even pre-ordained. Turning inchoate ideas into actual projects brought out the best of the lighthouse in Jack. There were the political shoals, of course, as well as the reefs of self-doubt and of dealing with rejection—of dealing with me, I suppose. But he was much less about the shoals and the dangers than about the excitement of the adventure ahead, of new vistas still to be discovered. As he stated in a message to Michelle,

You were truly the navigator who found and developed JAACAP Connect. That was such an original contribution, and a unique discovery for you. It reminds me of the ancient Polynesian voyagers, who looked up in the sky to see their map unfolding. Like them, you and the other editors-in-residence...
have found a veritable guide-path of stars to choose from – and guide us across thousands of miles of the unknown. Each of you has discovered your own star, under which you have sailed further and further.

I couldn’t keep this Jack all to the Journal and to myself – it did not seem fair. I wanted to share him with others, especially younger colleagues. To this end, I invited him as a speaker to a breakfast aimed at medical students, residents, and early-career psychiatrists. He had not heard of the breakfast format before, and was amused by the concept: “Will they serve cereal? Cap’n Crunch, perhaps?” From that day on, he affectionately called me “Cap’n Crunch.” I had no option but to reply in kind: and so, “Cap’n Jack” came to be. From that time on, we dubbed each other with increasingly over-the-top, fantastical nicknames and noms de plume.

One of our last email exchanges is telling, tuned as it was to the North Korean events du jour: “Greetings, Oh Radiant Great One!” I saluted. Not one to be undone, Jack retorted, “Dear Leader: Any radiance is simply a reflection of your brilliance, Oh Sun God.” One way of distilling our friendship down to its core is this: we never ran out of superlatives to express our affection for one another. I miss him so much. Who else will call me “Sun God” now?

Other invitations followed. He was too good a guest, and too gracious to pass on any of them. When I asked him to write the forward for the new edition of Lewis’s Textbook,1 I had only one condition for him: somehow, somewhere, include your beloved Emily Dickinson in there. He gladly complied2:

A WORD is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.

Her poem provided a springboard for Jack’s words, which are as true for that edited volume as they are for the Journal we have both been privileged to lead, as each “insists upon the continuity of our field, teaching us how to listen to the young voices who are just beginning to live. Its words are alive; in them are both the continuity and the change that are our field.”3 His knowledge of Dickinson’s body of work was encyclopedic, and one he had earned while hard at work during one of the “graceful retirements” he had become such an expert on. He studied Dickinson’s works deeply and published his findings in scholarly poetry journals (e.g.,4). He became an expert on topics as diverse and wide-ranging as raising sheep and the history of the Hawaiian monarchs. How I would have loved to be guided by the good Cap’n in his late-life role as docent at the Hawai’i State Museum of Natural and Cultural History.

Dr. Catherine DeAngelis (Editor Emerita, JAMA), and Dr. Andrés Martin (Editor-in-Chief, JAACAP) present the ‘Prophet in Your Own Land Award’ to Dr. John F. McDermott (Editor Emeritus, JAACAP) at the 56th AACAP Annual Meeting, held in Honolulu, Hawai’i, in 2009.

At what turned out to be my last invitation to him, Jack agreed to join the San Antonio 2015 Annual Meeting presentation “TED Talks Meet Perspectives: (Clinical) Ideas Worth Spreading.” He had not been aware of TED Talks before, but was, needless to say, a quick study. We debated about his topic. I was so inspired by the new lives he had crafted after his professional retirement that I wanted him to expand on the pithy jewel he wrote in 2014.5 He grudgingly agreed, but I could sense his discomfort. Some months later he let me know he did
not want to talk about retirement after all. He had had enough of the topic, and had Big Ideas in mind instead:

I took your advice to heart…and have revised my TED talk. It will now feature the changing mind/brain relationship, past, present, and future, including futuristic 2050 Buck Rogers (dating me) treatments as the new model–of mind emerging from brain–illuminates us in child and adolescent psychiatry. The title should be changed to: “Are the Mind and Brain the Same or Separate?” I hope this is acceptable to you.

Aloha
Your Loyal Servant

The false dichotomy of mind–body dualism had long piqued his interest, where he stood side by side his dear Belle of Amherst:\cite{6}

The brain is just the weight of God,
For, lift them, pound for pound,
And they will differ, if they do,
As syllable from sound.

Indeed, in his December 1997 valedictory editorial, he addressed the mind–brain connection head on. He welcomed the opportunity, noting that “if it’s true what they say, that textbooks tell you what’s already happened, and journals tell you what’s going to happen, then perhaps [my] experience [as editor] can serve as a pathfinder into the future.”\cite{7} His predictions were mostly accurate and prescient: he may not have had the terms for “epigenetics,” “RDoC,” “GxE interaction,” or “virtual reality,” but they are all in there, accurately foretold. He had envisioned a joint child and adolescent psychiatry meeting between Americans and Europeans in Paris in 2027: as we prepare for such a meeting in San Sebastian, Spain later this year, we can’t really fault the forecaster for being off by a decade and five hundred miles.

We will find out who our successor will be in June 2016, when the Journal’s seventh editor will be appointed. Jack, Mina, and I have already sent our best wishes, as we “look forward to reading issues yet to come and wish hearty Godspeed to the editor who will succeed us in our humbling charge.”\cite{8} To this sentiment I can only add my fervent hope for a new editor imbued with a touch of the grace, elegance, wisdom, and kindness of this great man. I salute you, Cap’n Jack, O Captain! my Captain!, as I thank you for your personal guidance through storms—and for allowing us all to envision new shores.

References

About the Author

Disclosure: Dr. Martin has received grant or research support from the National Institute of Mental Health. He has received royalties from Wolters Kluwer.
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It's a Family Affair: The Professional Family, Mentorship, and Development

Schuyler W. Henderson, MD, MPH

There’s a lovely line, attributed to Twain, about how when he was a boy, his father was so ignorant, he couldn’t stand to have him around, but when he reached adulthood, he was astonished at how much the old man had learned.

It’s a tender and wry reminder of how the conflict between adulthood and childhood—a mutual distrust, a pessimistic capacity to think the worst and an instinctive contempt—is a two-way street (David Bowie captured another side in “Changes”: “And these children that you spit on/as they try to change their worlds/are immune to your consultations/they’re quite aware of what they’re going through”).

After working for a couple of months with Jack McDermott as the inaugural John F. McDermott Assistant Editor-in-Residence, I sent him a piece of my writing for feedback. Not long after, he responded. Because of the time difference between New York and Hawaii, Jack’s responses always popped up when I least expected them, which, along with his amused and amusing enthusiasm, gave his emails a jester-like quality. I opened the email without much worry. It was the first piece of my writing that I had asked him to edit, I had been pleased with it, and all our previous correspondence was light and genial. The piece felt tight, polished, sound, and relatively straightforward, qualities that my writing naturally tends to lack. I was not surprised that Jack’s feedback began with praise. He was full of praise, and so practiced in it that he could make it sound easy.

What I was not prepared for was what came next: the exquisite precision and accuracy of his critique. It was delivered in the same casual, unforced tone as the praise; it was just as authentic, and it was just as crisp. He had found some mistakes, weaknesses, in my argument; more than that, he had not only found important weaknesses, he found ones that could be addressed and should be addressed. A two-sentence analysis from Jack was the editorial equivalent of the Serenity Prayer. (I was later to see similarly succinct expertise from another editor when a friend submitted an essay to a different psychiatry journal. I had edited the submission for him and liked it, and watched the piece go through the editing process. At the end, I thought it was good but not great. My friend received word from the editor-in-chief that the piece had been accepted, but told my friend they would be deleting the last sentence. My friend, playing the diva that all writers at some point play, was furious, feeling that the very last sentence was the pinnacle of the essay, the moment of genius, the pièce de résistance. After learning of the editor’s comment, I just stared at the essay, unable to believe how much better it was when that last line was cut out. Editorial carpet-bombers like me have much to learn from those editors who see so concisely and deftly what needs to be done.)

At the time, though, what most struck me was not just the quality of the editorial intervention itself; it was that it was coming from the Jack I had known up to that point. Friendly, encouraging Jack, very much the beaming emeritus figure. Reading that first critique, I lived the Twain experience in a flash: I was amazed at how much the old man had managed to learn since we first met.
A subtle prejudice, but a real one, had been exposed. Mentorship belongs to a time of life—the mentor’s and the mentee’s. The relationship can carry with it, and in it, the stereotypes and bigotries we hold against other generations, as much as it can be one of the great forms of intergenerational support. Some might call these stereotypes and bigotries a form of transference.

Reflecting later on that email from Jack, I noticed that Jack shared a quality I had seen in my grandparents: whatever I did interested them. When I was younger, I thought it was because I was so incredibly interesting. As I grew older, and as I was able to observe my grandparents’ and then Jack’s enthusiasm for those around them, I realized that their interest was much more a reflection of how interesting they were. Their interest was cultivated by their curiosity, by their wisdom (which allowed them to be so patiently amused by the prancing, preening young princes and princesses around them). Being interested in something is not a passive admiration, or a fawning intellectual passivity: it comes from bringing your own experience to bear on somebody else’s in an exciting way.

Winnicott said there is no such thing as a baby; there is no such thing as an adult either. We are co-created and co-creating throughout life. Our developmental models, so exquisite in some regards, are so primitive in others, especially when used roughly. We apply motifs to ages as if they belong to the age: ego integrity vs. despair, for example, putatively belongs to a certain age group, generativity vs. stagnation to another. And yet there is a certain absurdity to the notion that ego integrity, despair, generativity, and stagnation are not a function of relations, of mentorship, of what we do to and for one another across generations. When there are losses in the professional family, we do not just lose people, experience, and knowledge; we lose something of ourselves. But something of them remains in who we are, something they added, something they brought to us, the words they’ve written in the margins of our lives. This leads us to an epitaph for a mentor, a friend, a professional grandparent, and an editor who loved Emily Dickinson, from her poem “Death sets a thing significant”:

A book I have, a friend gave,  
Whose pencil, here and there,  
Had notched the place that pleased him,—  
At rest his fingers are.

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Disclosure: Dr. Henderson reports no biomedical financial interests or potential conflicts of interest.

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Letters to a Young Poet: Hawaiian-Infused Mentoring Wisdom Instilled by John F. McDermott

Stacy S. Drury, MD, PhD

Your life will still find its own paths from there, and that they may be good, rich, and wide is what I wish for you, more than I can say.

—Rainer Maria Rilke

The year that John F. McDermott was born, Franz Xavier Kappus published Letters to a Young Poet, a collection of letters he received from Rainer Maria Rilke, a Bohemian-Austrian poet acclaimed for his use of lyrical verse and imagery. Similar to Rilke’s timeless advice encapsulated in his letters to Kappus, the value of Jack’s words extend far beyond the specific circumstances for which they were written. I recognize now the enduring nature of Jack’s notes to me sent, not via mail as in Rilke’s era, but electronically, perhaps symbolic of Jack’s investment in merging the past wisdom of child psychiatry with the new era of neuroscience, Research Domain Criteria (RDoC), and, at least for me, telomeres.

Located in the vast Pacific Ocean lies a volcanic archipelago, the hundreds of islands spread over 1,500 km that comprise Hawaii. In 1969 John F. McDermott traveled from Ann Arbor, Michigan to these remote islands to join a pristine Department of Psychiatry at the University of Hawaii. Over the next 25 years, he built training programs in general, geriatric, and child and adolescent psychiatry. When he concluded his tenure as Chair, Jack had created the largest organized group of psychiatrists in Hawaii. Yet his daughter Elizabeth commented, “He never really retired. They gave him the Koa chair, but I don’t think he ever used it.”

This accomplishment is decidedly unsurprising to those fortunate enough to have been mentored and “grown” by Jack. He transformed mental health care for Hawaiians, training record numbers of natives while revering Hawaii’s unique culture and history. Naleen Andrade, MD, Jack’s successor as Chair of Psychiatry, and the first native Hawaiian Chair of Psychiatry ever, noted that Jack proudly described himself as:

... a naturalized haole, in homage to the Hawaiian monarchs who fostered a society of inclusivity and accommodation. [Jack] practiced māma po‘e Hawai‘i (honor and care for Hawai‘i’s people) with the depth and integrity of a kanaka maoli (indigenous Hawaiian), while never trying to present himself as a native Hawaiian.

I attempt now to pass along what Jack discovered in Hawaii, and brought to us, his mentees: the wisdom from words he discovered there, to challenge us to change and expand how we think and mentor, ideally sharing Jack’s unique influences with those we hope to guide and grow. Like the hibiscus, plumeria, and morning glories adorning the islands, I offer these words that Jack left us to make our human landscape ever more rich and meaningful:

‘AKA’AKA: Laugh. I cannot remember a conversation with Jack that didn’t end in laughter. No matter the circumstances, positive or negative, at some point during our interactions he would tell a story or remind me of some previous event, and then he would laugh. His was the kind of warm, sonorous laugh that makes one think of their childhood and a grandfather. I think his loudest laughs centered around his own errors, the stories he often told as I struggled with my own failures. For everyone who knew Jack, I suspect the image that most quickly comes to mind is one of him laughing and the ever-present accompanying deep blue sparkle in his eyes. McDermott mentoring, apparently, requires laughter. Laughter at our own foibles, joy in the serendipity of sometimes finding a rose, and sometimes a thorn—all are vital.
HA’AHÁ’A: Humility, laughing. Ha’aha’a has many meanings: laughing at our own missteps, acceptance of who we are, and becoming very silly-looking and, at the same time, very wise. This Hawaiian value teaches individuals to have humility and respect for others, helping us to understand that the truest greatness is found in being superior to your previous self. Jack asked probing questions, leading us to find our better selves. Ha’aha’a was a central facet in his mentoring style.

ALAKA’I: Leadership. Jack embodied leadership, uniquely and according to this Hawaiian value; his leadership style was inextricably linked to initiative, independence, and optimism. Jack patiently sought and found the possibilities and strengths in everyone around him, attended to his own skills and lead by example; when inspiration occurred, he would eagerly call the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from a pay phone with his own quarters to discuss grant possibilities. Forward-thinking mentors, beyond the constraints of our existing paradigms, naturally embrace alaka’i and the greatest of responsibilities, that of truly leading others.

HO’OHANOHANO: To conduct oneself with distinction, honor, and integrity. Jack was, to quote John Schowalter, a gentleman. He honored the dignity of others, both individuals and cultures, particularly the Hawaiian culture, voraciously learning all that he could but never adulterating intrinsic meaning. His daughter Beth described Jack as

... a man who pushed us to always resist the easy answers, who listened deeply, often when you thought he wasn’t really paying attention. He wanted always to get to the heart of the matter, ask the unasked question, eager to unravel the most daunting complexities.

His leadership and transformation of the Journal, first as its editor and then through his mentoring of the editors that followed, including those of us blessed enough to have a position with his name, embodied ho’ohanohano. Striving for this value represents yet another cornerstone of McDermott mentoring.

MAHALO: Thanks, gratitude. Literally mahalo translates into “may you be in divine breath.” However, Mahalo also reflects a manner of living—that of living always in thankfulness and gratitude, seeing the richness in the world around you that makes life at every moment a precious experience. I hold this image of Jack in his shepherding days in Hawaii and think of the vast number of associations between herding and his experiences with the field of child psychiatry. He traveled, watched sunsets, and, while never really stopping, managed somehow to still see and smell the hibiscus and orchids surrounding him. I imagine Jack would tell us all Mahalo, thank you, and remind us to both “get moving” and yet still notice the world’s gifts all around us.

As I reflect on all of Jack’s accomplishments, I wonder, What next, where do we go from here? Yet even for...
this, Jack gave me the advice, years ago, clairvoyantly predicting that someday I would need it, as he described to me how Hawaiians deal with death and loss:

The essential point is that [the Hawaiians] extended out the grief [of losing a loved one], took much longer to adapt to the loss, with imagining the lost one and the transition of the person and his/her spirit, prolonging that transition instead of polarizing life and death like we do. A healthy side effect is that they traditionally made up from quarrels during this time—and it, of course, was followed by a magnificent celebration, a luau or dinner party, when the grief work was done.

As we begin this next journey without Jack at our side, I take solace in Jack’s teachings on the Hawaiian grief process. I have no wish to polarize Jack’s life and death, as that would mean he was no longer here; instead I continue to adapt to this loss, as I suspect many others do as well. I prefer to think of this time as a period when Jack’s spirit will transition within each of us, guiding us to take his wisdom, laughter, and warmth and shape it with our own strengths. I see his sparkling eyes in the sunsets, hear his laughter in the waves on the shore, and feel his warmth each time I see anyone in a Hawaiian shirt, especially blue. Jack reminded me of an old adage that has perhaps great relevance as one considers the transition from mentee to mentor: “To know who you are, you must know who you were, and there you will find the seeds of who you will become.”

Because of Jack I have a much better understanding of who I am, and now see the seeds of who I hope to become as I strive for ha’aha’a, alaka‘i, and ho‘ohana-hano. To Jack, I say a fond mahalo. When this transition is done and the grief work complete, I promise to ensure a magnificent celebration to honor Capt’n Jack.

And finally I want to add just one more bit of advice: to keep growing, silently and earnestly, through your whole development; you couldn’t disturb it any more violently than by looking outside and waiting for outside answers to questions that only your innermost feeling, in your quietest hour, can perhaps answer.

–Rainer Maria Rilke

About the Author

Stacy Drury, MD, PhD, is vice chair of Research in Pediatrics and the Remigio Gonzalez Professor of Child Psychiatry at Tulane. Her clinical and research interest is in the impact of early life adversity on child development and how that parent–child relationship, genetic, and epigenetic factors influence the lasting negative traces of those experiences.

Disclosure: Dr. Drury has received grant or research support from the National Institutes of Health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Altria Foundation, Harry Seneca, and the Tulane National Primate Research Center.
The Brain Is Wider Than the Sky: John F. McDermott on the Poetry of Emily Dickinson

Alyssa Murphy, MA, and Mary K. Billingsley, ELS

Evidence, speculation, and inspirational posters aplenty indicate that some of the most talented and well-known historical figures of art and science lived and worked with mental illnesses. From Isaac Newton to Virginia Woolf, depression to schizophrenia, history is littered with brilliant minds affected (or rumored to be) by mental disorders. Of course, because these famous individuals, often long dead, are unavailable for comment, scholars and enthusiasts look to what remains—bodies of work, letters, journals, family and local records—anything that might offer clues as to the lives they led and the state of their minds. This specialized work is often the result of cross-disciplinary collaborations or extracurricular undertakings—mental health professionals and art historians or literary theorists working together, dabbling in each other’s arenas out of interest and curiosity.

None of this likely comes as a surprise, but what may surprise you is that one of these multidisciplinary dabblers was none other than the late John F. McDermott, Jr., MD. A renowned child and adolescent psychiatrist, Jack was a leader within the field, professor and editor emeritus, mentor, advocate, and friend. He was a longtime supporter and enthusiast for all things Orange and his dedication to the Journal and to mentorship contributed in no small part to the creation of an early-career position in his name on the JAACAP editorial board and to the launch of this publication.

The first time I (M.B.) read Jack’s writings on Emily Dickinson, I could not help wishing that I had cited his work in a paper I wrote in college on Dickinson’s deeply rooted anxiety about death. Her great worries about eternity and the afterlife—being trapped, conscious, inside a tomb, and the great unknowability of Heaven—are the focus of just some of Jack’s professional forays into literary theory. Through analysis of her poetry and letters, Jack studied Dickinson’s mental health—her unease about death, her “nervous prostration,” and seasonal changes in her mood—and conducted the first quantitative data-based assessments of her writing.

The impression one receives of Jack through his work on Dickinson is that of a keen observer of the mind, who, expert in his field, has perhaps the best chance of glimpsing the turmoil within Dickinson while also marveling at the mastery of the craft evident in her work. In a paper examining Dickinson’s account of her nervous ailment, Jack first traces the history of what was then called “nervous prostration,” from “nervous exhaustion” to “neurasthenia” to what we today recognize as a panic disorder.1 He cites her evocative descriptions of her symptoms and the Dickinson family’s apparent predisposition to anxiety. He also proposes a secondary condition of agoraphobia and speculates that it was perhaps this overpowering need to seek isolation that offered an opportunity for deeper exploration of the self, thereby transforming the illness into a sort of kindling for poetic inspiration. He further explored these ideas in a paper examining the relationship between Dickinson’s anxiety and her creative output based on documented periods of emotional distress.2 Noting her tendency to write far less in the winter months during the first phase of an 8-year period of productivity and then, following an emotional crisis, far more during a second phase of elevated activity and creativity, he concludes that a “bipolar pattern” is indicated.
The trope of the artist touched by madness is probably almost as old as art itself. But Jack was uniquely qualified to venture beyond this characterization to examine the intricacies of Dickinson’s self-described affliction and the larger meaning for her poetry. He could apply his professional analysis of the patient’s words, his broad knowledge of related medical literature, and his interest in poetry to delve deeper into the poet’s mind, insofar as such a thing is possible a century after her death. The fact that his work on Dickinson was published in both literary and psychiatry publications is a testament not just to the relevance of his work, but to his skill merging the two fields.

Jack’s approach to Dickinson’s poetry often injected a quantitative element into a discipline that tends to rely far more on subjective analysis. He employed computerized word content analysis, a technique more common in linguistics, to explore the identity of the “Master” in the so-called “Master Letters,” and sorted poems by approximate date of composition to examine periodicity. He used computer content analysis to assess the therapeutic value of Dickinson’s death poetry, creating a visual representation of her word profile through category and mean percentage frequency. From this and his knowledge of contemporary patient accounts, he concluded that meditating on the topic of death seems to have given Dickinson a feeling of control over an ever-present fact of life. Jack’s quantitative approach to Dickinson’s poetry and life shed new light on old controversies and also shoved stalled debate out of its rut. Where before Dickinson scholars might rely on subjective impressions and comparisons of word choice, for example, to identify the Master, Jack approached the debate from an entirely different direction.

Just as Jack wrote, “… poetry cannot be taken as autobiography [or] simply be used to project an image of the artist on a screen,” the same must be said for discussions of his work—they cannot encompass or hope to convey all that he was and did. Even so, Jack’s Dickinson studies are illuminating, giving us new ways to consider her art and glimpse his extracurricular affinities and explorations, and that the work we love—the most passionate and rewarding—is often a blend of both.

**Take Home Summary**

- Make room in your life and career to pursue the things that interest you and about which you are passionate.
- Psychiatry has broad applications beyond the hospital, lab, and clinic.
- Think broadly about how your area of expertise might enhance understanding of issues in other disciplines.

**References**

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