

# How to make psychiatry residency more rewarding

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**D**uring my residency, I have taken advantage of several opportunities that helped me develop and become more confident as I assumed the role of Academic Chief Resident in my final year of residency. In this article, I describe some of these opportunities, including seeking extra supervision while providing psychotherapy, engaging in psychotherapy for oneself, becoming part of leadership, and participating in quality improvement (QI) projects.

**Obtain extra supervision while providing psychotherapy.** I feel it is important to become comfortable with different types of therapy during residency. There are various opportunities to receive additional education via 1- and 2-year courses. I attended the Prelude to the Institute of Psychoanalytic Education, a 1-year introductory lecture series, and joined New York Psychiatric State Institute for my fellowship, which included reading papers describing different psychotherapeutic techniques and case discussions by experts in the field, which solidified many core concepts and helped me develop stronger therapeutic relationships with my patients. Advanced training in a specific evidence-based psychotherapy modality, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, or interpersonal therapy, is also an option.

**Consider seeking out psychotherapy.** When I started providing therapy to my patients, I became aware of how important it is to invest in your own personal therapy

to understand your mind. I researched the importance of personal therapy for psychiatric clinicians, and to my surprise there have been lengthy debates on both its positive and negative impacts. However, I have come to believe that personal therapy is an important part of training for mental health professionals because it helps us better understand ourselves, since it is impossible to take the therapist's mind out of the session. Although personal psychotherapy is not required, residency is an opportune time to pursue it.

**Get involved and become part of leadership.** I always believed that when united, we are stronger. It is a great privilege that as residents, we can become an integral part of advocacy and leadership in different organizations at both the state and national level. Here are 2 examples of how I got involved:

- **The American Psychiatric Association (APA).** When I attended the APA to present my posters for the first time, I wanted to become more actively involved. So I contacted my district branch representatives for guidance. I attended meetings and became involved in the Brooklyn District Branch as a resident representative. I was elected APA



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#### Disclosure

The author reports no financial relationships with any company whose products are mentioned in the article, or with manufacturers of competing products.



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### Clinical Point

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Area 2 Resident Fellow Member Deputy representative (a 2-year position). In this position, I represent residents and fellows from New York in the APA assembly. This has been a gratifying experience, and I have come to appreciate the proceedings of the Assembly and the amount of work that goes into creating Action Papers and Policy Statements.

• **The Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR).** Representation in CIR is extremely important in this political climate. The resident CIR Delegates are selected via elections. Delegates have an excellent opportunity to attend the Delegate Conference to learn how CIR operates and represent the department in CIR meetings.

CIR is extremely supportive of resident involvement in QI projects and provides opportunities to chair a quality council for residents.

**Participate in QI projects.** Involvement in QI projects provided me with the opportunity to learn unique skills, including how to think creatively, design a study, and work with statisticians to extract and analyze data. The main focus of my research has been resident well-being and burnout.

These are a few of the wonderful opportunities I have been able to experience during my residency. I would love to hear from other residents about their similar experiences.



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