

Impact of an inspirational training director on a resident's life

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The term *psychiatry* is derived from the Greek words “pskhe” and “iatreia” which mean “healing of the soul.”¹ The desire to heal souls from different ethnicities, religions, and languages can be overwhelming for a trainee resident who is new to U.S. culture. The fear of having difficulty in building rapport with patients because of cultural bias and the dread of not understanding accents, slang, jokes, and nonverbal communication can be so frustrating that it overrides the intense desire of becoming an empathetic and successful physician.² During this critical period of training, residents need a training director who nudges them forward through the darkness and peels away the superficial and suffocating layers of incompetence that may keep them from reaching their full potential.

I started my residency training in 2014 without any substantial scholarly work in my background or clinical experience in the United States. However, I had a great learning experience at my training program and would like to express my gratitude by recognizing my program director's (Panagiota Korenis, MD) role in helping me accomplish my career goals. She believed in me when I was not able to believe in myself, and helped me overcome a helpless feeling of isolation and desperation during my intern year. Because of her mentorship and supervision, I presented 20 posters and oral presentations; published 5 works; drafted guidelines for training residents, including course material on the health care disparities faced by the Lesbian, Gay

Bisexual, Transgender, Queer community; created a tool to predict readmissions in an inpatient psychiatric setting; received many prestigious awards, including Resident of the Year, a Certificate of Academic Excellence, a Young Scholar Award, and an American Psychiatric Association Diversity Leadership Fellowship for 2017-2019; and was accepted for a child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship in one of my dream programs, Boston Children's Hospital.

I strongly believe that the impact of an inspiring, motivating, and encouraging program director on a resident's life is monumental. Here are some of the qualities I believe make a great program director who can significantly transform a trainee's life:

A positive attitude.

- Encourage trainees to believe in their abilities, even if they stumble.
- Unleash and nurture their talents, and help them recognize their strengths and confidence.
- Foster a warm, welcoming, and supportive environment that enables residents to strive to reach their potential and goals.
- Boost confidence, acknowledge genuine efforts, and praise achievements.

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Disclosure

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Clinical Point

Foster an environment that enables residents to strive to reach their potential and goals

- Encourage involvement in future projects.

Empathy and generosity.

- Treat residents with respect and care, while recognizing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Understand them at both a professional and personal level.
- Support meaningful and suitable projects that residents are passionate about and at which they excel.
- Influence residents by helping them understand the impact they have on patients and the program.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to the individual needs of each resident and provide constructive feedback.

Easy accessibility.

- Build good rapport with residents.
- Listen carefully to the residents' ideas and feedback.
- Reassure residents that they can ask any questions or raise any issues they want to address.

Leadership.

- Undertake a leadership role within multidisciplinary teams, and collaborate effectively with other medical specialties for continuity of care, mutual support, and interdisciplinary education and communication.
- Assert authority when needed, and make important decisions for the program.
- Manage conflicts effectively and timely.
- Strictly monitor duty hours.³

Education.

- Design an educational curriculum relevant to all clinical settings.

- Provide protected time for didactics and scholarly activities.

- Ensure that residents develop a comprehensive understanding of the field.

- Actively involve residents in teaching, and modify the curriculum based on residents' input and feedback.

- Schedule classes for in-service exams (eg, Psychiatry Residency In-Service Training Exam) and for the board exam preparation.⁴

- Promote residents' autonomy and sense of competence.

Promote residents well-being.

- Encourage a work-life balance.
- Focus on team building and communication, and organize process groups.
- Adopt innovative ways to enable residents in managing stress.
- Organize social events and group activities, and provide support groups.
- Ensure adequate sleep hours and time away from work to prevent burnout.

Career development.

- Provide career guidance, and connect residents to appropriate resources for further professional development.
- Recognize that mentoring is a lifelong activity that does not end with the completion of residency training.

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