

The PsychList

~A modern "spin" on UBMD Psychiatry news and events~



A Note from the Chair...



As you may have noticed I begin our meetings with words of appreciation and recognition of our faculty for accomplishments since the previous meeting. Today, I want to recognize someone very special to me. On August 10, 2023, my grandmother, Dorothy M. Bykowski, was recognized by the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences for her contribution to further medical knowledge and research. This was a bittersweet moment for me.

Beth Smith, MD, Interim Department Chair

Human anatomy was a fundamental component of my medical education at the University at Buffalo School of Medicine. Those that selflessly donated their bodies were our silent, indispensable teachers. I remember the huge sense of responsibility and deep appreciation I had toward my donor. In addition to teaching me about major systems of the body, my donor begot empathy, a fundamental core for physicians that is at the heart of good care. I learned countless lessons on empathy and compassion from his generosity and selflessness. Although I did not know the name of my donor, I got to know him through the exploration of his body.

For one small group in this past year's anatomy class, their donor's name was Dorothy Bykowski or, as I lovingly called her, Nana. The laugh lines they may have noticed on her face were from my loving family, her beautiful blue eyes once watched me grow, and her soft skin provided comfort when she would hold my face to hers. My Nana wanted to give back to the University that gave me so much and to help teach medical students in our community. She believed in our education and wanted to contribute to the future of medicine in Buffalo.

I am honored and humbled that my personal experience and her pride in my accomplishments influenced her decision to donate her body. My Nana left a lasting impact on me, and I am just as proud of her contribution to medicine as she was of mine. I am hopeful she made a similar impact on those that learned from her donation. ❤️

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Employee Spotlight

Name: **Dr. Sara Lowmaster, PhD**

Date of Hire: **July 11, 2022**

Current Titles: **Assistant Professor**



Sara Lowmaster, PhD

Sara Lowmaster, PhD, explains her position as well as involvement within the Practice below:

Q: Where do you specifically work?

A: While my office is physically located at ECMC, my research on clinical outcomes involves collaborating with various clinics and programs throughout the department including the Center for Advanced Psychiatry, Erie County Youth Services Center, the Children’s Psychiatry Clinic, Project TEACH, and APIC. I also conduct research on the role of stress and trauma as risk factors for psychopathology and other health outcomes. In line with this work, our research group, including Drs. Dubovsky, Antonius, and Leidenfrost, in collaboration with Erie County Courts, are conducting a study examining the impact of stress and exposure to traumatic information during jury duty on the mental health of jurors. In terms of direct clinical work, I conduct fitness for duty evaluations. I also supervise undergraduate students, psychology interns, residents’ and fellows’ research projects as well as provide clinical supervision to psychology interns.

Q: Can you explain your involvement in the Outcomes Research at the Center?

A: I became involved with the Outcomes Research in 2020 with the plan to develop a battery of psychological tests that could be administered to patients at each appointment to determine if treatment was working, who it was working for, and what treatment modalities seemed to be most effective. Some of these questions stemmed from changes that had occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic, where there was an increased demand for mental health services as well as a shift to telehealth practice. However, the outcomes faculty group, led by Dr. Dubovsky, also recognized having outcomes data could be used for reimbursement purposes (e.g., value-based care) as well as create a database that could be used by residents, fellows, or faculty for quality improvement or other projects. The initial phase consisted of developing a transdiagnostic battery of measures that could be given to adult patients at the Center for Advanced Psychiatry. Once we established the measures, I programmed software to score the measures immediately and send feedback to clinicians. I have overseen the implementation of the outcomes measures with clinic patients from four providers at the Center. Over the course of the past year, we have collected responses from 600 patients and made adjustments based on feedback from the providers, patients, and staff. At this point we are expanding the outcomes in a few directions. First, we will be adding other providers and patients to the outcomes at the Center over the next month. I have also met with faculty and providers at the Center and the Children’s Psychiatry Clinic to begin the process of developing a similar outcomes battery for child and adolescent patients. Throughout the past year, I have also worked with Drs. Ficarro and Steele at Erie County Youth Services as they expand their assessment and treatment programs to include outcomes.

Q: How do you balance the challenge of teaching and precepting students?

A: I spent eight years as a professor in a psychology department where I taught undergraduate and graduate courses, supervised clinical students, and served as a research mentor. This experience has helped immensely in preparing to teach and precept students in a medical school setting, but balancing this with my research responsibilities can be challenging. There are time pressures for both preceptors and students, so the goal is to try to capitalize on what time you do have to make it most productive for everyone. This means that I spend a lot of time collaborating with students to establish their training goals or questions at the outset so I can facilitate their learning. To that end, I embrace the importance of active learning for students. I strive to incorporate students in ongoing projects so they can learn or apply a new skill or jump in on a research project in a topic of interest that will serve as a basis for their own work. When I teach didactics on clinical or research topics, my hope is that students can immediately apply some knowledge they have gained from that didactic.

Employee Spotlight, continued

Q: What do you feel is the most challenging aspect of your job? The most rewarding?

A: One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is mentoring students and trainees whether it be in research or clinical supervision. It is very meaningful to see someone apply a new skill and develop a sense of self-efficacy and confidence. The most challenging part of my job is navigating different systems or considerations that are needed to accomplish what seems to be a simple or small piece of a project, whether it be technology or legal aspects or healthcare systems. Thankfully, everyone I've interacted with is supportive and most of the issues we've encountered have been able to be resolved.

Q: Is there anything further that you would like to share?

A: Outside of my direct responsibilities, I serve on the editorial board for several journals, the Assessment Section of APA's Division of Clinical Psychology board, and on committees for student matters and continuing education for the Society for Personality Assessment. In my free time, I enjoy reading, listening to podcasts (I highly recommend *Quantitude* for the research content as well as the banter), and traveling.



Ending the Physician/Patient Relationship

Psychiatrists need to be extremely conscientious when they decide to terminate relationships with their patients. Ideally, all patients should receive a termination letter when treatment ends regardless of the reason for termination. The usual guidelines regarding termination apply even if the patient is covered by a MCO (Managed Care Organizations). If the psychiatrist is on panel with an MCO, contracts should be checked as the termination process can be very specific to meet the contract requirements.

If a psychiatrist is treating a patient in crisis, any termination (regardless of the reason) makes them vulnerable to charges of abandonment if the patient is harmed by their action. Unless the patient is willing to transfer to another practitioner, or hospitalization occurs, termination is risky in any emergency situation.



For an initial visit or consultation, you may see a patient once and decide that you do not want to continue treatment. It should not create a problem if whoever schedules this appointment makes it clear that the first meeting is just an opportunity for you and the patient to see if you want to establish a treatment relationship. If you do not do this, it will be your obligation to help the patient find a new doctor and remain available until a new doctor is found.



Reasons for terminating treatment may be the patient's failure to follow treatment instructions or fails to pay, a psychiatrist's belief that another therapist would provide better treatment, a determination that therapy is no longer needed, or a psychiatrist's retirement. To do this without running the risk of liability for abandonment, the psychiatrist must give the patient a reasonable amount of time to find a new therapist. The psychiatrist/counselor must also assist the patient in finding a new therapist and provide records and other information as requested by the new therapist.

Thirty days' notice is considered appropriate, but a longer period of time may be necessary in an underserved area. When terminating a treatment relationship, the provider must give the patient proper medication instructions, especially if abrupt cessation of medication could cause injury. If a patient chooses to terminate the relationship, or fails to show up for appointments, it is appropriate to acknowledge in writing that the relationship has been terminated and recommend further treatment if it is needed.



Again, it is never appropriate to sever a treatment relationship when a patient is in an emergency situation unless the patient wants to see another provider or is hospitalized. Lastly, it is advisable to send termination letters via certified mail, return receipt requested.



Residency News



Submitted By:
Paula DeRegno, MD

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT CORNER

Quality Improvement is essential to providing excellent patient care and safety, but can also be used to improve efficiency and clinical outcomes. There are several models which focus on Quality Improvement; the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) uses the Model for Improvement developed by Associates in Process Improvement. It is a simple, yet powerful tool for accelerating improvement by focusing on testing changes on a small scale using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model. As part of residency training, all residents are expected to participate in hospital or department quality improvement initiatives. In addition, they are expected to identify, develop, and analyze a quality improvement project either on their own, or in teams. Recent resident projects have focused on both clinical and educational improvements:



“Addressing the Risk of Metabolic Syndrome in an Outpatient Mental Health Clinic”

“Identifying Barriers to Increased Resident Autonomy”

“Improving the Student Experience in the Psychiatric Emergency Program”



Ideally, residents will work with faculty members to design and implement quality improvement projects. To learn more about the process, please view this short but informative video:

[Dr. Mike Evans Video: An Illustrated Look at Quality Improvement in Health Care | IHI - Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#)

Currently, Carol Regan and Dr. Pristach are overseeing the residents' projects, but we would welcome additional involvement by other faculty members. Please let us know if you are interested!



References:

Ihi.org

Langley GL, Moen R, Nolan KM, Nolan TW, Norman CL, Provost LP. *The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance* (2nd edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers; 2009.

[Science of Improvement | IHI - Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#)

Advisory Board of NIAAA Consortium



Please join the Department in congratulating Kenneth E. Leonard, PhD, on his appointment to the Program Advisory Board of the National Consortium on Alcohol and Neurodevelopment in Adolescent-Adulthood (NCANDA-A). As Director of UB's Clinical and Research Institute on Addictions, Dr. Leonard was selected based on his expertise and experience relevant to the goals of the NCANDA-A consortium. Ken's research focuses on substance use in intimate relationships, in addition to his extensive research in alcohol and substance use utilizing epidemiological, experimental, and clinical approaches.

Dr. Leonard is currently involved with the following:

- ◆ Co-principal investigator, *"Pain Medication Prescriptions and Misuse Following Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorders"*
- ◆ Involvement in studies funded by the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports
- ◆ Conducting a statewide survey of young adults' cannabis and alcohol use
- ◆ Coworker in identifying gaps in evidence-based treatment for addictions in New York State

The purpose of the NCANDA-A is to determine the effects of alcohol use on the developing adolescent brain, and examine brain characteristics that predict alcohol use problems. Members of the Program Advisory Board attend an annual meeting of the NCANDA-A consortium to not only receive updates on research progress, but also to discuss issues relevant to the conduct of this longitudinal study. Member involvement is also called upon routinely to consult with principal investigators and to provide advice about research issues pertinent to the study.



Thank you, Ken, for your commitment to research and congratulations on this very deserving appointment!



The Department of Psychiatry's very own, Dr. Yogesh Bakhai, threw the first pitch out for the Buffalo Bison's game held on Friday, August 18, 2023.

For this particular game, the Lions Club of WNY teamed up with the Buffalo Bisons for "Lions Night with the Bisons."

The Buffalo Bisons trounced the Rochester Red Wings at Sahlen Field for a commanding 14-8 win!

The Buffalo Bisons finished the 2023 season with a record of 76 wins and 72 losses, placing them fifth in the league's East Division. Better luck next year in making the playoffs!



Dr. Yogesh Bakhai



The Department of Psychiatry is delighted to announce the following promotions:

- ◇ Dr. Dori Marshall has been formally announced as Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Oishei Children’s Hospital
- ◇ Dr. Jane Elberg was named Medical Director of Outpatient Psychiatric Services at ECMC
- ◇ Dr. Michael Guppenberger was named Director of Inpatient Psychiatric Services at ECMC
- ◇ Dr. Jennifer Haak has been promoted to Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry
- ◇ Dr. Joshua Russell was promoted to Associate Medical Director at the Oishei Children’s Hospital Children’s Psychiatry Clinic

Please join us in thanking and acknowledging all on their accomplishments—
Congratulations!

Siegel Award Winner

Dr. Charles Camp, pictured right, was selected as a 2023 recipient of the Siegel Award. This award, chosen by student voters, is given annually and based on extremely high standards involving not only the treatment of patients, but also the training provided to future physicians.

Charles was honored with the *Clinical Siegel Award*, and was described by student voters as:

“kind, approachable and a superb teacher who values students rotating through the Partial Hospitalization Program as team members”

“The learning environment he fosters from the outset with students is a perfect balance between comfort and curiosity.”

Dr. Camp continues to excel as a Clinical Assistant Professor, in addition to his role as Director of Medical Student Education, for the Department of Psychiatry.



Dr. Charles Camp



Research Gift

The Child and Family Asthma Study Center, a lab with research conducted by Drs. Bruce Miller and Betsy Wood, is the proud recipient of a monetary gift through the Michael Reinard Fund. This is part of an annual donation supporting ongoing asthma research at the University at Buffalo. The Loughran Family has contributed this money on behalf of Michael Reinard, who died recently and had suffered his entire life with severe asthma.

Congratulations Bruce and Betsy, and we support and thank you for your on-going commitment to the field of research!



This year's new faculty & staff welcome was held on August 12, 2023. We would like to thank our new Interim Chair, Dr. Beth Smith, for hosting the picnic at her home for all full-time faculty, staff, and their families to celebrate. It was a beautiful day where everyone was able to congregate and meet our new employees:



Kristina Baranyi—Nurse Practitioner
Joshua Nazirbage, MD—Child Psychiatry
Rajvi Patel—Research Project Assistant
Russell Pizzo, MD—Adult Psychiatry
Noha Shalaby—Staff Assistant
Yana Shimanovich—Research Scientist
Ellen Steele, PhD—Psychology
Eleanora Stuart—Research Technician
Mark Sutton, DO—Adult Psychiatry
Jamal Williams, PhD—Research



Quotable Quotes

“The difference between a mountain and a molehill is your perspective.”

- Al Neuharth

“The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself with out.”

- Oscar Wilde

“I know worrying works, because none of the stuff I worried about ever happened.”

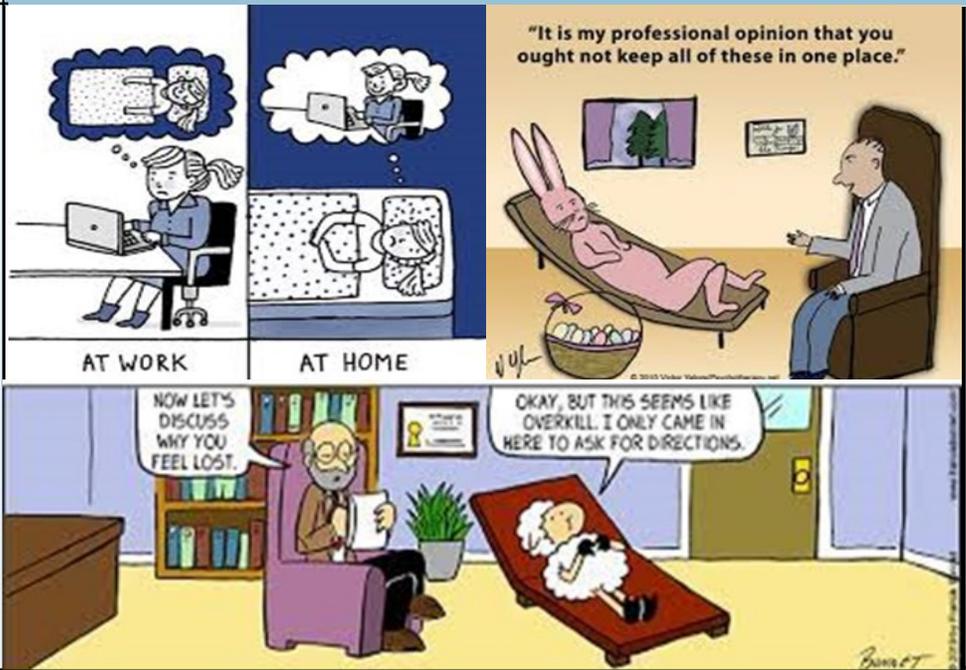
- Will Rogers

“One of the keys to happiness is a bad memory.”

- Rita Mae Brown



Comic Corner



Happy Anniversary!



The Department of Psychiatry would like to acknowledge the following for their dedication and service:



- * Dr. Jane Elberg
- * Dr. Peter Martin
- * Dr. Holly Mutton
- * Dr. Matt Ruggieri
- * Dr. Sourav Sengupta



- * Dr. Barry Willer

Your commitment and hard work are truly appreciated—Congratulations!

Calling All Writers...

If you would like to contribute to future editions of the quarterly UBMD Psychiatry Newsletter, please contact Julie Mikula at juliemik@buffalo.edu or at (716) 898-3597. All submissions must be received on or before December 15, 2023 to be included in the next edition, published in January 2024. Thanks, in advance, for your input!

