



What I Wish I Learned in Grad School Tips

Work/Life Balance & Leadership

- As you begin the transition from trainee to professional, it can be a time to re-think and reset habits.
- Many people find themselves prioritizing work-life balance while also continuing to set new and ambitious goals for themselves or have them set by their employer or setting.
 - Carefully navigating these demands at the outset can set you up well for the long-term and prevent burnout and promote well-being.
- Practices you begin now will become habits (e.g., note writing, reading research, participation in state and local groups)
- Establishing work-life balance while advancing in your career (how to prioritize among multiple, competing responsibilities; learning how to decline/set boundaries while maintaining relationships)
- Leadership – don't wait. Seek opportunities at your organization, division, or through APA.
- Think about what are the things I have to say yes to and what do I want to say yes to
- Sometimes as an ECP being tasked with "grunt work."
 - Potential solutions: say no to as much as possible, focus on short-term, seek opportunities to advance (licensure), seek or avoid certain practice settings, ask for support from mentors and focus on what you can get out of an experience

Early Career Habits

- Practices you begin now will become habits
- Paperwork / Writing habits:
 - Dedicate specific writing time, build in the habit of writing soon after a therapy session or designating specific aspects of an evaluation to write same day (e.g., clinical summary)
 - When negotiating face-to-face expectations for jobs, also negotiate time for writing (e.g., the first or last hour of each day)
 - Write bullet points of the highlights of sessions to reduce the burden of recall if immediate note-writing is not possible
 - Identify a protected "catch-up" time in your week where you can complete more challenging notes or consult with other providers when needed
 - Set up systems to create supervision records, including peer supervision (e.g., number of people, amount of time, summary of content, frequency)
 - Consider technology to reduce burden: smart phrases for notes, creating templates (e.g., intakes, letters, notes, reports), Microsoft HP touchscreen for handwritten notes turned into text; Apple notes app that syncs between multiple devices
- Apply your knowledge of psychology and behavior to your own experience!
- Keep learning
 - Set up a time or a practice to read research articles, listen to podcasts, do CE credits that is

- scheduled (i.e., a few hours monthly or every other month)
 - Opt into a journal club or create one that meets in person: lunch meeting or non-sterile space (restaurant, park)
 - Continue to track hours specifically for CEs! And systems to save CE certificates; check CE opportunities that are unique for your state (e.g., teaching, publications, peer supervision can all earn CEs in some states)
- Daily wellness habits (healthful nutrition, sleep, movement) go a long way in supporting your work and avoiding burn out
- Consider your lifestyle / environmental preferences when seeking jobs (e.g., office setting, expectations for early arrival or working in the evenings or weekends, number of people in the office)
 - Request in-person meetings when feasible, especially when other work is virtual
- Transitioning from work life to home life: rituals and boundaries (commute, closing notes, creating to-do list)
 - Creating different work and home environments when working virtually
- Change the senses
 - Specific smell (e.g., candle, diffuser) for writing or working with clients
 - Visual cue for “closed” desk or “open” desk (e.g., computer background, lamp on)
 - Something tactile to signal the transition
- Do not leave clinic until you have written your behavioral observations and noted diagnoses/diagnostic considerations
 - Becoming comfortable enough with your clinical interview and ability to maintain rapport while typing directly into the report or note during an appointment dramatically reduces report writing time
- Habits for managing personal workload as a supervisor and student/trainees’ responsibilities
 - Scaffolding
 - Start by providing the students a small responsibility (e.g., completing the consent process, scoring and writing up questionnaire results) and provide a lot of feedback. This will allow you to see their ability clearly and allow them to gain skills on tasks with less risk.
 - Try to negotiate some of your clinical FTE time to be allotted as educational activity instead.
 - Scheduled/standing one-on-one supervision is protective for the students to have designated time to ask non-patient (or non-research related) questions and prep for other goals.
 - Student introductions in class
 - Ask each student to share something they want to get out of the course, which can tailor goals/interactions with the student across the semester.
 - Balancing your deadlines with training
 - Let trainees know the expectation for note-writing or report writing at the beginning of the rotation (e.g., same day, 48-hours, before standing supervision time) and ensure that their deadline allows you time to review the note prior to your own deadline (e.g., all notes signed in EMR within 1 week).
 - Take your own notes on the evaluation or therapy session to serve as a back-up, even if duplicating the report template. Then you will have what you need no matter the quality (or slowness) of student completion. You can merge the two forms or scrap yours later.
 - When delegating tasks, one option is to provide a script or written list of steps for the task.
 - One supervisor made these for each clinical task (e.g., consent for testing, clinical interview questions [the actual question, not a bulleted list], scoring questionnaires).
 - While this task is a heavy lift on the front-end, it can save time in supervision year over year and allows the supervisor to feel certain the trainee should have what they need to complete the task.

Mentorship & Networking

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- Networking for Psychologists:
 - Cultivate connections with peers and mentors

- Amplify career prospects and access to opportunities
- Exchange knowledge, resources, and support
- Mentorship Benefits:
 - Gain guidance from seasoned professionals
 - Obtain insights for career advancement
 - Develop skills and competencies through personalized guidance
- Maximizing Mentorship:
 - Seek out experienced mentors in the field
 - Actively engage in mentorship relationships
 - Utilize mentorship for career growth and development

Non-Traditional Positions/Industry & Recognizing the Transferable Skills

- Non-traditional/ Potential Industry positions
 - User experience/ User Research
 - Learning and Development training
 - Management
 - Policy and Advocacy Development
 - Consultation
 - Project/ Product Management
 - Roles in Tech
 - Content development/ Speaking & Writing
- Transferable Skills and examples
 - Human first principles
 - Therapy or counseling
 - Interacting with study participants
 - Critical and analytical thinking
 - Identifying problems based on literature reviews
 - Data analysis for research projects
 - Research
 - Quantitative
 - Qualitative
 - Recognition of different types of validity
 - Understanding of methods
 - Hypothesis testing
 - Organization and Planning
 - Curriculum development
 - Managing a research study or lab
 - Developing treatment plans
 - Assessment of problems and behaviors
 - Initial assessments with clients
 - Conducting literature reviews to understand gaps
 - In session recognition of verbal and non-verbal behaviors
 - Conducting interviews
 - Writing and Communication/Presentation Skills
 - Writing capstone, thesis or dissertation projects
 - Presenting the proposals of those projects
 - Defending theses and dissertations
 - Case presentations on clients
 - Teaching courses
 - Curriculum development
 - Collaboration
 - Working across different disciplines for coordination of care

- Working with other team members on writing projects
- Co-presenting at conferences
- People management & Emotion Regulation
 - Supporting others in distressing circumstances
 - Self-awareness and practice of emotion regulation
 - Creative problem solving

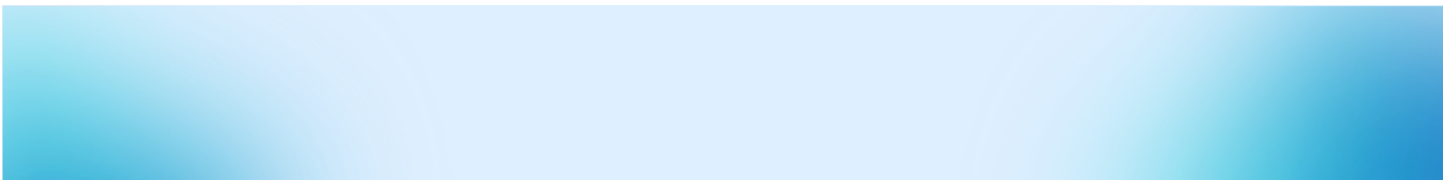
Negotiating Your Position and Navigating the Professional World

- Once you get a job offer, be prepared to do the following before signing your contract!
- Negotiate:
 - Salary
 - Research the latest salary averages, means, and ranges for your specific setting (e.g., AAMC Salary Tables for an academic medical center), specialty (e.g., APA's salary survey of neuropsychologists), and demographic.
 - This is especially important in academia, where starting salaries vary dramatically and what you negotiate at the beginning determines the size of your paycheck later.
 - "Thank you for your offer of X--but Y is closer to my ideal salary."
 - Equipment
 - Negotiate on computers, desk top screens, standing to sitting desk, and lab supplies.
 - Job parameters
 - Required teachings, meetings, productivity requirements
 - What is your productivity measured on? Hours billed? Money reimbursed?
 - How is supervision, consultation, professional development training counted/compensated?
 - Professional Development Funds
- Read your contract in DETAIL:
 - For any position/agreement
 - For example, if taking insurance, be aware that insurance and managed-care contracts often contain such pitfalls as unacceptably low reimbursement rates.
 - Check for non-complete clauses or other gag clauses.
- Manage your finances:
 - Consult with a financial advisor familiar with psychology salaries and billings
 - E.g., TIAA, Chase etc. Have free educational consultants
 - Start building your emergency savings through a high-yield savings account
 - Decide when you want to retire and from there use a calculator to determine how much you want to invest in various IRA funds
- Navigating your professional growth
 - Join early and often.
 - Get involved in professional activities outside of your institution, including APA governance, state psychological associations, local psychological associations, APA divisions and professional organizations that represent your interests.
 - Many of these entities have committees devoted specifically to early-career psychologists, and your involvement will expand your horizons exponentially.
 - Surround yourself with mentors AND professional acquaintances
 - They will not always be available or the most present for your needs BUT people knowing of you is helpful for being invited for talks, committees, and for promotion in academia!

Administration & Ethics

- Positioning Self as Administrator
 - Psychology Training Programs

- Academic vs Clinical Faculty
 - Track / Rotation Management
 - Program Administration
- Service Administration
 - Policies & Procedures
 - Productivity / Deliverables
 - Billing, CPT Codes, Relative Value Units (RVU)
- Troubleshooting as Administrator
 - Imposter Syndrome
 - Support System
- Supervision & Supervising
 - Clinical vs Administrative Supervision
 - Licensure & Responsibility
 - Doctoral Students/Interns vs License-Eligible Psychologists
 - Nested Supervision
- Chain of Command
 - Multiple Reporting
- Interprofessional Relations
 - Psychologists
 - Concurrent Supervision & Evaluation
- Physicians & Allied Health Professionals
 - Scope of Practice
 - Work Culture
 - Training of Medical & Allied Health Trainees
- Extramural Organizations
 - Governmental Agencies
 - Confidentiality / Disclosure





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Early Career Habits

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- ❖ Keep reading and keep learning through listservs, podcasts, and journals
- ❖ Establish work-life balance while advancing in your career
- ❖ Practice declining things that do not serve you at the moment/set boundaries
- ❖ Daily wellness habits (healthful nutrition, sleep, movement) go a long way in supporting your work and avoiding burn out
- ❖ Think about your preferences when seeking jobs
- ❖ Request in-person meetings when feasible (e.g., team meetings, gatherings, supervision) if other work is occurring virtually
- ❖ Practices you begin now will become habits (e.g., note writing, paperwork, reading research, participation in state and local groups)
 - Examples of handling different types of practices
 - Paperwork/Writing habits
 - Therapy (face-to-face time) can be more inherently rewarding
 - Dedicate specific writing time daily and build in the habit of writing soon after a therapy session
 - An hour at the end of the day or beginning of the next to complete notes
 - When you are not able to complete notes fully, getting started reduces the hurdle to finishing the work later
 - Write bullet points of the highlights of a session to reduce the burden of recall
 - Identify a “catch-up” time in your week where you can make sure notes from the previous week are closed

- When writing notes, Microsoft HP has a version of a touchscreen with a stylus. Also, the use of Microsoft Office suite features such as One Note and Microsoft tasks can allow handwritten notes to be turned into text and for items to be added to a “task list” which is accessible on multiple platforms
- Apple also has a notes app that can be accessible on multiple apple products to allow for the maintenance of a to do list
- Recording peer supervision (e.g., number of people, summary of content, how often the group met)
- Transitioning from work life to home life
 - When commuting home from work, closing notes and no screen time
- Transitioning to telehealth/work from home appointments
 - Use a specific sense to create different environments within the same physical space
 - A specific candle that is lit only when writing your dissertation or working with clients
 - A different computer background or something visual that signals the desk is “closed” following a workday vs. “open” that you change each morning and evening
 - Include something tactile in your chair that is a signal for the workday
 - Making the physical changes each day as a ritual will help set your mind on the task at hand
 - May be important to separate note writing time and client time as well if you find your mind distracted on your to-do list during client work
- Continuing education
 - Opt in to or create a journal club on a particular topic
 - Example, meet every two weeks or monthly in a community space (i.e., non-sterile space! like a restaurant, bar, or park); there may be a chair who facilitates the group and a rotation of who identifies a topic to discuss or selects an article
 - Logistically track the number of credits (e.g., presenter, organization, title, and if you have a certificate in a file/spreadsheet) to ease license renewal and counting how many hours you have obtained
 - Download the CE certificate immediately
 - Check your state’s unique CE options like teaching, publications, and peer supervision
 - Check state board website rules on CE

Tenure-track

Understanding the differences between types of institutions (e.g., R1s vs. R2s vs. undergraduate vs. CC vs. academic medicine, etc.) and the types of experiences you need to be acquiring/skills you need to demonstrate that are heavily weighed at the place you want to end up.

- ❖ Guarding your research time and prioritizing your own projects – while still demonstrating a generous and collaborative nature
- ❖ Reviewing as a solution for perfectionism and being slow to submit manuscripts until they are “flawless”
- ❖ Look into training programs (e.g., R25s) that can scaffold you toward developing an externally funded program of research
- ❖ Put your licensure hours in place first to put yourself out there
- ❖ Always apply!

Maintaining a healthy work/life balance

Be intentional, don't be pressured by society, your classmates, or the program. You do not have to give up your life to succeed in graduate school or your career, but you do have to be intentional and you do have to have a plan.

- ❖ Within your work explore topics of interest to you
 - There will never be another time in your professional career where this is completely acceptable and encouraged
 - Do what you like, want to explore, or what you will be rewarded for, nothing more
- ❖ This is important because it may cause ill effects on your mental and physical health
- ❖ Working full time is enough
- ❖ Navigate the work systems you are in
- ❖ Be ruthlessly intentional!
- ❖ Pay attention to your job tasks only, any additional things that are outside of your job responsibilities are not necessary to do
- ❖ Don't play with your boundaries
- ❖ Focus on the tasks that matter and what you excel in at work
- ❖ Set alarms to focus on your work tasks
- ❖ Push back on tasks that are outside of your position
- ❖ Communicate your expectations with your clients
- ❖ If you're overwhelmed ask for help and express this to your supervisor
- ❖ Take time to step away from your work, shut off that email when work hours are over

Networking Tips & Mentorship

How to build small connections into meaningful relationships.

- ❖ Follow-up emails after happy hours, reaching out about sharing or citing someone's research, seeking out people with similar positions
- ❖ Position yourself as an expert in a certain area
 - You can become an “expert” by choosing a topic of interest connected to your work, reading a lot, and creating, then giving a presentation on the same topic repeatedly!
- ❖ Join groups with similar interests
- ❖ You need a balance of internal skills to know your limits but also communication skills both to stand up for yourself and to read and analyze people.

- ❖ Establishing a relationship doesn't have to be intimidating - can look like coffee once a year, an email once a month
- ❖ You need multiple mentors! "Ask multiple people for directions, then forge your own path"
 - It is important to find a mentor that fits your goals - one mentor likely will not fill all roles necessary for you.

Conducting research

Psychologists sometimes feel that their experience in conducting research has been very far from ideal. Especially in terms of choices related to methodology and statistical analyses, some early career psychologists heavily relied on their dissertation supervisors, and do not feel confident nor connected and encouraged to conduct research beyond their dissertation work. Another challenge is related to publishing in academic journals and going through the experience of a paper being rejected as a result of the reviews.

- ❖ Delegating tasks
 - www.trello.com: Great resource to create boards with various tasks that can be assigned to individual people with a due date
 - Have a research assistant track and add how long particular tasks are taking to estimate the work load
 - Outsourcing tasks to interested trainees or other providers
- ❖ Frequent (weekly) brief check ins with the primary investigator (PI):
 - Ensure the "ball is not in the PI's court"
 - Ask "What do you need from me to keep going on this step?"
- ❖ Managing limited research time
- ❖ Reaching out to trainees at your location, other providers, or trainees in other settings (e.g., local undergraduate psychology majors or labs in undergraduate settings, local doctoral programs)
 - Provide an ad and application with an interview process
- ❖ Block off specific time in your weekly schedule
 - Plan for a specific amount of time for "leftover" clinical documentation from clinical activities
 - Have an automated email response that lets people know you are responsive to emails on other days
- ❖ Difficulty translating ideas or concepts into measurable projects, narrow down research proposals or ideas
- ❖ For case studies, read and consider creating
- ❖ For Ethics papers, an option for publication and presentations that are not based on data-driven outcomes
- ❖ Needs assessments
 - Create a survey and send to stakeholders (e.g., patients, providers, psychologists, medical providers)
 - Use to show rationale
 - Engender support in your own organization or for grant proposals
- ❖ If you are experiencing difficulties in medical settings, try initiating a needs assessment
 - Psychoeducation for medical providers about how their work could impact treatment, quality of life, or functioning in the hospital
- ❖ Recruitment methods
 - Access listservs
 - Google related organizations and reach out to inquire if they have a listserv
 - Generally, people reported good responsiveness /openness to permit posting

- Have research already IRB approved prior to reaching out to organizations