

PENN PSYCHIATRY

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER | RESURGENCE AND ANTI-RACISM

OCTOBER 22, 2020



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Faculty, Trainees and Staff:

3535 was a tad busier than it's been for a long time as many of you came in for your flu shot. It was great to see the wonderful people who work here, albeit with masks and 6 feet between us. That did not interfere with the sometimes raucous banter! Thank you for getting your flu shot! If you have not yet done so, please do. This year it is more important than ever (even though of course as employees we have always been required to get one). You might ask why exactly. Well, at the beginning of the pandemic, eons ago, the first thing we did as a health system was to set up triage tents for ILI (influenza like illness). That was important because the symptoms of flu and COVID overlap but the outcomes and interventions are quite different. As we head into the cold weather, which based on what is happening today in Alaska, will not ebb the COVID flow, it is key to have as few respiratory illnesses floating around as possible and while the flu vaccine is not a silver bullet, it helps by either preventing or at least mitigating the symptoms.

I always tell you how important the work that you do is and how grateful I am for your efforts. And that is certainly true. Today, Cory Newman shares two vignettes that reinforce that idea.

Please take care of yourself! Make sure you keep to your routines and also please vote! Incidentally, early in-person voting is available in Philadelphia for the next few days in case you want to take advantage of that option.

THIS IS WHY WE COME TO WORK!

Cory Newman shares below two situations related to his clinical work at the CCT from the past week that he found very heartening:

- First, I received a book in the mail from out of the blue. It was authored by a patient I saw in treatment 25 years ago. He inserted a letter in which he stated that the seed for this book was planted all those years ago in our work together when he learned that he had a voice, that his observations on life were worth writing about, and that he had the ability to be an author. He thanked me profusely (I was deeply touched). It just goes to show you that you never know the full scope of your positive impact on a patient, and how long that positive influence will last. It could just be for a lifetime.
- Second, I took advantage of a wonderful natural opportunity to help a patient become more aware and conscious of issues of racial equity. The patient expressed deep concerns about people (e.g., among coworkers, and friends of the family) viewing him as racist and rejecting of his political views. Using validation, active listening, and motivational interviewing methods, I managed to engage this patient in a fruitful dialogue about opening up his viewpoints so that he could show others that he was more knowledgeable and flexible than they thought. Toward that end, I gave him the homework assignment of reading Ta-Nehisi Coates's book *Between the World and Me*, explaining to the patient that even if he didn't agree with the author on all points, he would resonate with the author as a father trying to raise a son safely in a dangerous world. Further, being able to cite and quote the book would make the point to others at work and in his personal life that he is doing the work of being an anti-racist. My patient said he was going to go on-line right after the session to buy the book. I felt very good about that, and it gave me a feeling of hope.

These stories remind us why we do what we do. Thank you Cory.

SOMETHING FUN TO DO!

Penn Psychiatry is not so much a place as it is its people. Like a luxury automobile, you can't see all of the parts. Instead you see a well-oiled machine gracefully motoring from Point A to Point B with onlookers saying, "Now that's a nice car!" So if you had to say what kind of car we are, what would it be? Click [here](#) to cast your vote!

WELLNESS RESOURCES

Click [here](#) to access our Wellness Resources.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

Vision

Promoting health for the brain and mind to transform lives and the world.

Mission

Penn Psychiatry develops and implements new ideas to understand, prevent, and treat disorders of the brain and mind, through innovative research and discoveries, outstanding educational, world renowned clinical services, and transformational public health policies.