Dear Colleagues,

"Snap! Crackle! Pop!"

About now, some of you are thinking that a busy Fall at CPA has resulted in your current president becoming a little loose around the edges... Never fear, this introduction has a point! Each issue of The Colorado Psychologist, I find myself looking for some present moment connection to the content of this column... Call it an ongoing exercise in mindfulness or just a simple desire to anchor my thoughts to the daily life of, not just a full-time psychologist but, a psychologist as a full-time human being. The focus of this issue of TCP brings our attention to the topic, experience, and development of the Early Career Psychologist (ECP). Some of you are lamenting that this identity category did not appear until more recently, bringing with it the joy of Association dues discounts! This happens to be an arena of particular interest to me as I share in this identity of ECP. So what does the Rice Krispies tagline have to do with a President's column (bonus points for those who immediately proclaimed, "Rice Krispies!" after my introduction)? I suppose because, as I poured a bowl of cereal this morning, I got to thinking about how development is this inevitable process and all of us, each and every one of us, one day finds ourself all grown up and eating Kashi and Bran Buds. In other words, what happened to the days of putting an ear up to the cereal bowl so you could hear your puffed rice "talking?" Better yet, what became of that Cinnamon Life or unnaturally colored Fruit Loops? Honey Smacks? Lucky Charms? What on earth is Sarah talking about?! Regardless of your stage in career, you were once, or are now, an Early Career Psychologist. And, if I was a betting woman, I would also surmise that there was something different about this stage of your career than any other time.
Message from the President - Continued

For me, these early years of my career have been marked by many things. I can easily recall the very beginning of this ECP identity as one of anxiety. Yes, anxiety. I believe it may have been all of a week after I was conferred my doctoral degree that I had the distinct realization I was no longer living neatly and warmly in the cozy support of my university. That the client who arrived in my chair about one month after I hung my shingle and started a private practice actually expected and believed I could and would help him/her! The bravado I carried as an intern quickly disintegrated into abject insecurity. Surprisingly, I found my training and competence did not magically evaporate and the return road to efficacy was shorter than it felt. Interestingly, the anxiety I felt also served to fuel the excitement and enthusiasm for finally engaging in work I felt a calling to do. In the past six years since I received my hood and goofy doctoral hat, I have felt nervous, thrilled, scared, creative, alone, and uniquely supported and mentored all at the same time. So what does my bowl of cereal have to do with this? The playfulness and whimsy of yesteryear reminded me that these early years of my career will one day be long gone, and despite the growing pains and fear that come with early development, I am certain I will miss this time.

Be well (Snap! Crackle! Pop!),

Sarah E. Burgamy, Psy.D.
President, Colorado Psychological Association

Message from the ECP Chair

As the Chair of the Early Career Psychologist (ECP) Committee, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce this special edition of The Colorado Psychologist. This is the fourth year in a row that CPA and the Editorial Committee of the TCPt have devoted an edition exclusively focused on topics most relevant to psychologists early in their careers. The ECP Committee appreciates CPA for their continued commitment to early career interests and concerns, and we thank our authors for volunteering their time and wisdom writing articles for this edition.

The theme of this year’s edition is Navigating the Early Career Years: Tips and Lessons Learned. CPA understands the importance of engaging ECPs in their mission. The energy, creativity, leadership, and innovation ECPs provide are instrumental to CPAs efforts to advance our profession. We hope that as this year comes to a close, ECPs will be inspired to accept CPA’s invitation to come to the table, join the conversation, and be the voice of psychology in Colorado in 2013.

Beyond representing the interests of CPA’s ECPs in Colorado, the mission of CPA’s Early Career Psychologist Committee is to provide a network for training, mentoring, education, and social and professional connection. We welcome your comments about this edition and early career psychologist questions. If you are an ECP, we need your input, participation and leadership. We are actively seeking new committee members. If you are interested in participating in the ECP Committee, please contact Felicia Greher at feliciagreher@comcast.net or check out the CPA website http://www.coloradopsych.org/about/committees.

Dr. Greher is a licensed psychologist and director of Denver Psychology, LLC. She is the Chair of the ECP Committee and the APA liaison for Colorado to the Early Career Psychologist Network.
Message from the Editors

Dear CPA members,

We are happy to bring to you our sixth and final themed edition of 2012. The 2013 schedule for TCP will be announced electronically in mid-December. Please contact Shawna Urbanski, PsyD, submission coordinator, at s.urbpsyd@hotmail.com if you would like to suggest a theme for future editions or if you are interested in contributing an article. Thanks to all contributors for making 2012 a great year for the TCP!

Sincerely,

The TCP editorial team

Calender of Events

CPA Board Meeting.................................................................3rd Friday of every month

(except August and December) 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Articles due for The Colorado Psychologist..............................................January 15, 2013

Theme: TBD

Submission commitments due to Shawna Urbanski, PsyD at s.urbpsyd@hotmail.com
Some Tips on Ethics for Early Career Professionals
Robin Post, PhD, Chair, CPA Ethics Committee & the Members of the CPA Ethics Committee

Psychologists who are entering clinical practice are confronted with complex, novel, and
sometimes challenging situations. At the start of a career in psychology the terrain we encounter is
frequently unfamiliar. At times, the most prudent course of action is not clear to us. The CPA Ethics
Committee has been asked to identify a few issues that are most germane for psychologists who
are beginning their careers.

Ethics Committee members were in accord about three issues that you are most likely to encounter
at the beginning of clinical practice. The ethical issues that we identified are: 1) multiple
relationships and boundaries in psychotherapy; 2) awareness of our limits of competence; and 3)
problems that can arise when we provide opinions in legal cases.

Multiple Relationships and Boundary Violations
There are many challenging situations that can arise in psychologists’ relationships with their clients.
For example, we may find ourselves in a quandary if one of our long-term psychotherapy clients
invites us to her wedding. We may wonder if it is acceptable to serve on an educational panel with
one of our clients. Once psychotherapy has ended, we may wonder if it is permissible to accept
our former client’s invitation to meet for coffee.

The APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists provides guidelines for practitioners, which address the
issue of multiple relationships:

3.05 (a) A multiple relationship occurs when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person
and (1) at the same time is in another role with the same person, (2) at the same time is in a
relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with whom the
psychologist has a professional relationship, or (3) promises to enter into another relationship in the
future with the person or a person clearly related to the person. A psychologist refrains from
entering into a multiple relationship if the relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the
psychologist’s objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a
psychologist or otherwise risks exploitation or harm of the person with whom the professional
relationship exists.

Principle 3.05 (a) also states that “multiple relationships that would not be reasonably expected to
cause impairment or risk of exploitation or harm are not unethical.” Principle 3.05 implies that a
psychologist will not violate the ethical code if he or she acts in a fashion that does not present a
risk of harm to the client or impair the clinician’s judgment.

Taking the wedding invitation as an example, the Ethical Principles would encourage us to consider
the potential risks and benefits for the client. We might wish to be present at the wedding to
provide support to a client who has worked hard on relationship issues. We might have concerns
about compromising the client’s confidentiality or apprehension that we are stepping out of our
role as a therapist into a social relationship. The ethics code permits discretionary judgment calls on
some issues. However, it is necessary for psychologists to be mindful of how our actions will be
viewed by the licensing board. In our state, the licensing board tends to be firm in its opposition to
dual relationships in psychotherapy. It is the opinion of the Ethics committee that psychologists
should take a conservative approach in any situation that might be perceived as a boundary
violation. When you are faced with a dilemma involving therapeutic boundaries and you are not
Tips on Ethics for ECPs - Continued

sure how to proceed, we would encourage you to seek consultation from a knowledgeable colleague or from the Ethics Committee. From a risk management standpoint, we believe that a cautious approach to dual relationships is the wisest approach.

**Boundaries of Competence**

Early in our careers, psychologists are likely to develop, expand, and ultimately define our areas of expertise. A number of dilemmas may arise in practice in which it is necessary for us to define the limits of our competence and take appropriate action when we encounter situations that fall outside those limits. For example, a psychologist would like to take on the role of forensic expert witness in criminal justice cases. The psychologist has expertise in the assessment of adults, but she has had limited training in forensic psychology. How does she proceed to develop her career in this new direction?

In Principle 2.01, the Ethical Principles addresses the issue of professional competence:

2.01 (a) Psychologists provide services, teach, and conduct research with populations and in areas only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience.

(c) Psychologists planning to provide services, teach, or conduct research involving populations, areas, techniques or technologies new to them undertake relevant education, training, supervised experience, consultation or study.

A psychologist who would like to become a forensic expert witness or provide Dialectal Behavioral Therapy might prepare herself by taking classes or workshops, through independent reading, and by obtaining ongoing consultation with a colleague who is experienced in the desired area of practice. In some instances, specialty certification is also necessary.

**Role Boundaries in Family Law Cases and other Litigation**

Psychotherapists are frequently asked by attorneys to offer their opinions in custody and personal injury cases as part of the legal proceedings. It is essential for psychologists to observe the appropriate boundaries when we offer our opinions in legal cases. Questions that arise when we become involved in litigation, include: 1) Do we have the training and expertise to offer an opinion?, 2) are we familiar with the relevant judicial rules and procedures?, and 3) have we completed the evaluations or gathered the information that is required before we offer an opinion? Most of us are aware that we should not offer opinions on matters that are outside the limits of our training and expertise. We are encouraged by Ethical Principle 201 (f) to become reasonably familiar with judicial or administrative rules governing our role as a forensic psychologist. Consultation, reading, and workshops can be useful means to acquaint ourselves with these rules and procedures.

We can also place ourselves at great risk by offering opinions in instances when we do not have adequate information on which to base an opinion. This problem arises with some frequency when opinions are requested regarding child custody or supervised visitation. The licensing boards typically take the position that practitioners cannot offer opinions about custody unless they have
completed a formal custody evaluation. It is considered a boundary violation for a psychotherapist who is treating a family member to complete a custody evaluation. With the appropriate releases, we can offer opinions regarding the client we are treating. However, when we are treating one or more family members in psychotherapy, we should not offer opinions about custody or parental visitation.

When you are faced with ethical dilemma in your practice, we would like to encourage you to consult with a knowledgeable colleague or supervisor, to contact the CPA Ethics Committee, or to consult with an attorney who is qualified to address any legal questions you might have. The CPA Ethics Committee is available to provide consultation and advice to psychologists, psychology trainees, and the public. The CPA Ethics Committee can be reached by contacting the CPA office.

References


Members of the CPA Ethics Committee include: Robin Post, PhD, Chair, Kari Fraser, PhD, Andrew Loizeaux, PsyD, Stacy Nolan, PsyD, Julie Van Heyningen, PsyD, Stephanie Kleiner-Morrissey, PsyD, Dena Sorokin, PhD, Kathleen McNamara, PhD, Jenny Cornish, PhD, ABPP, and Laurence B. James, PsyD, JD, adviser to the Ethics Committee.

Working in an Academic Medical Setting: Reflections from an Early Career Psychologist

Emily F. Muther, PhD

Acquiring a job after graduate school and the – seemingly endless – training required to become a psychologist can feel overwhelming and often times daunting. Finding a job that incorporates your interests, skills, and experience can add to this challenge. As psychologists, we are trained to be proficient in many arenas including clinical work, research and scholarly contributions, program development, teaching and training, and leadership and administration. Many new psychologists find themselves in a position of having to choose between a career that incorporates one or a few of the skills we have obtained over years of training and experience acquired. A career in academic medicine affords the opportunity to integrate many of the skills and strengths psychologists possess without having to give up on areas of interest.

Just like the process of applying for a position within many organizations, obtaining a position in an academic hospital setting can be a challenging, yet exciting process. In order to be as competitive as possible, it is helpful to know what you’re getting yourself into. This should include having a clear idea of the position you are applying for within a complex system that includes various ranks and appointments. Applying for a full time position in academic medicine means applying to become a faculty member within a department of the hospital housed within a larger school of the university (e.g., Department of Psychiatry within the School of Medicine at the University of Colorado Denver). There are various ranks and appointments of faculty members in academic medicine. The most common are: Instructor, Senior Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professor. Early career psychologists are typically eligible to enter a
Working in an Academic Medical Setting - Continued

position at rank of Senior Instructor or Assistant Professor, with the primary distinction being whether or not you have obtained any publications. To be a competitive applicant and successful psychologist within a hospital setting, it is crucial to understand the system and setting for which you are applying.

Similar to applying for many jobs, the application process requires submission of a cover letter, curriculum vitae, and list of references. Additionally, a job talk is often a required part of the interview process. This is an opportunity to provide members of the selection committee with an understanding of your background, training and unique skills you bring to the position. It is also a chance to describe your goals and ideas about contributing to the position and department as a whole. Applying and interviewing for a position within a hospital setting usually means meeting with multiple disciplines, such as physicians, nurses, social workers, and administrators. Having an understanding of interdisciplinary collaboration and how your role fits within that team is critical for success.

Working in a hospital setting means being a part of an organization that employs a variety of professionals and demands for collaboration beyond the field of psychology. It may seem appealing to stay within the identity and comfort of psychology, but when we are able to extend beyond our background, we do more to serve as advocates for our profession by teaching other disciplines about the strengths and value psychologists possess. Learning how to collaborate and incorporate multiple perspectives into the work that benefits patients and promotes wellbeing is an important task of a psychologist working within an academic medical setting.

Obtaining a job in an academic medical setting can be rewarding. Through my training it became apparent I was not ready to give up any of my experiences with clinical practice, research, or teaching and training and I found a perfect fit in my position in the School of Medicine at the University of Colorado Denver, at the Children’s Hospital Colorado. I began my position as Assistant Professor and Pediatric Psychologist this fall and work on the inpatient medical floors as part of the Psychiatry Consultation and Liaison Service as well as in pediatric primary care at Children’s Hospital Colorado. I engage in clinical research investigating the impact of integrated mental health services in primary care and have utilized clinical informatics to collect data from EMR to explore health outcomes. Part of my job includes the training and supervision of various trainees. I supervise the pediatric health psychology interns on their specialty rotation and regularly work with medical students and residents. I am able to continue my commitment to teaching by leading didactic instruction to trainees and medical colleagues.

Working in a hospital setting can be ideal for an ECP who is interested in maintaining an identity as a clinician, researcher, teacher, and administrator. Being successful in this environment requires an interest in diversity of experience, a sense of one’s short-term and long-term career goals, and an ability to understand the structure that exists and affects guidelines for psychologists including productivity, promotion, and responsibility.

Emily Muther, PhD, is a licensed psychologist who received her doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of Denver. Dr. Muther completed her internship at Harvard Medical School/Children’s Hospital Boston and her postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric psychology at Children’s Hospital Colorado. She began her position as Assistant Professor in the School of Medicine at the University of Colorado Denver, at Children’s Hospital Colorado in October of this year.
It has been a pretty amazing first year for me. The shift from student to professional has brought with it some unique challenges and unexpected rewards. Some of the challenges that arose caught me by surprise and I hope they never have to be repeated. Others have been things I expected, but which have been different than I imagined. All of the experiences have offered opportunities for me to examine my self-concept, professional identity, ethics, personal values and goals. When an opportunity arose to contribute to this month’s newsletter I decided I’d like to share some of the lessons I’ve learned this year, in the hope that they might be useful to other Early Career Psychologists.

Lesson 1: Connection is good, isolation is bad.
We often tell our patients that having a strong support network is important to develop and maintain mental health. But as professionals we sometimes do not take our own good advice. There are so many benefits to keeping in regular contact with our peers. A few benefits I’ve noticed include a greater awareness of diverse clinical issues, a greater openness to new ideas, a greater ability to find appropriate services for clients, and flexibility in thinking. Isolation on the other hand, whether intentional or not, can lead to poor treatment of clients and poor mental health for ourselves. So, reach out, meet more people or start a consult group. Swap ideas, research and experiences; be open to asking for help. We will all be better for it.

Lesson 2: Know what you don’t know
When finished with graduate school, internship and licensure, we are deemed “good enough” psychologists. Though we are “good enough” in many ways, there may still be important areas that we don’t know enough about in order to do our best clinical work. Since professors are no longer assigning material, it’s now our job to be aware of the gaps in our education and areas where learning more could help our clients. By having a view of ourselves as “learners for life” we will be able to do good by our patients and expand what defines our “best” clinical work. Our more experienced colleagues, and those in different sub-fields can be a great help in this area. All you have to do is ask.

Lesson 3: Specializing is useful and rewarding
Specializing is often considered to be good advice for a psychologist these days. By specializing you will likely be able to provide more specific and up to date advice for patients and find a niche area that may lead to greater professional opportunity. But, as an ECP specializing can be intimidating at first. There will be many specialists in the community who have much more clinical experience than you do. Those professionals may or may not agree with the way you approach clinical problems. As I’ve navigated early career specialization I have found the following useful to keep in mind:

1. Be sure you know the basic information necessary to be an adequate specialist in your area before you begin treating clients.
2. Keep learning/working with more generalist issues to prevent everything from starting to look like a nail when you have a hammer.
3. Learn how to respectfully disagree with other professionals.
4. Know how and when to ask for help. If you give yourself permission to not know everything and to seek help when needed, then specialization early in your career can be very rewarding.
A GOOD YEAR: Reflections on the First Postgraduate Year

Lesson 4: Back to basics
When in doubt, focus on being a good person. When it comes down to brass tacks, wouldn’t we all rather see a professional who is kind, thoughtful and can admit when they don’t know something, than see someone who knows it all but doesn’t treat us with respect? In my mind “being a good person” means respecting others, recognizing that everyone is exactly where they are, meeting people where they are and being open to learning from each other. That applies not only to how we treat patients, but how we treat each other in the professional community. Expansive amounts of knowledge do not make one a good psychologist- being a caring, respectful and curious person does.

I hope the lessons I learned this year can aid you in your journey as an ECP. Best wishes to you all.

Heather Twitty, PsyD is a clinician in the Autism Services Program at Kaiser Permanente and she provides clinical supervision to doctoral psychology students at the University of Denver.

The Path to Leadership Leads to a Greater Work/Life Balance

OR
ECP's: Colorado Psychological Association Wants YOU

By Jane Hancock, PsyD

A wise mentor once told me that even in the early stages of our careers, it is still vital that we find ways to participate in the broader community of psychologists in order to prevent professional burnout. Burnout? For early career psychologists? Yes, I believe that even those of us just beginning on our professional paths must find a way to look beyond the EPPP, licensure, and the honing of our clinical skills, and consider the long-term potential of our careers.

I first encountered the Colorado Psychological Association in graduate school, and since then, I have felt reassured by the availability of the Ethics Committee hotline and the efforts of the Legislative Committee to protect the practice of psychologists in the state of Colorado. Learning about the association's advocacy for our field made me appreciate the wisdom of the psychologists who have worked to uphold the integrity of the work we do, and it has also motivated me to realize that it is the next generation of psychologists who will protect and perhaps even redefine what it means to be a psychologist in the state of Colorado.

I stepped into the role as Secretary of the CPA in August. This provided an opportunity not only to learn about the ethical, legislative, and educational aspects and organization, but also has allowed me to embark on a path of leadership. My appointment as Secretary is encouraging, as it illustrates a sincere interest established psychologists have in the point of view of ECPs. When ECPs interact with established psychologists, we can enjoy the mentorship of those who have achieved more work/life balance, and make contacts that will help steer our careers in new and inspiring directions.

The committees of CPA represent a diversity of interests, and I can state with confidence that you, as an ECP or advanced career psychologist, can find a committee in our organization, or in the broader Colorado psychologist community, that will fit or advance your interests:
ECP’s: Colorado Psychological Association Wants YOU - Continued

Communications, Community Service, Ethics and Professional Review, Finance, Legislative, Membership, Mind-Body, Nominations, Political Action, and Program committees ensure that the varied interests of our field are represented. Liaisons and task forces also offer the opportunity to contribute to our field.

As ECPs step into leadership roles, we are able to reflect on the reasons we are in this field and find a sense of purpose that guides us towards a more enriching professional life. I believe that even early on in our careers, we can prevent burnout by becoming engaged with a larger community. I encourage all ECPs who are reading this edition of TCP to look ahead and see that engaging in leadership roles will enrich your career, and enrich our field.

Jane Hancock, PsyD is currently the Secretary for CPA, and is working towards licensure. She works at Aurora Mental Health’s Intercept Center with dually-diagnosed children and their families, specializing in adapting evidence-based treatments, and is an active member of the Training Committee at Aurora Mental Health Center.

Wishing all CPA members a safe & happy holiday season!
For All Life’s Occasions

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The Colorado Psychological Association advances the profession of psychology through advocacy and education for the promotion of psychological health and well-being.

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