

Be a mentor—it's good for you

This issue of the *BCMJ* includes a series of essays on the important yet disappearing teaching tool of mentoring. To ensure BC has a sustainable and vibrant health care system, our aspiring young doctors require role models and guidance. This has never been more true than it is today with our dwindling supply of physicians, fewer medical students choosing family practice, and doctors opting out of the field altogether to work in allied industries.

I would imagine there are few physicians who have not benefited from the advice and counsel of a more experienced colleague at some time during their training and practice—I know I did. One of my earliest clinical instructors was, coincidentally, the BCMA's CEO Dr Mark Schonfeld, and it was partly his taking me into his office that convinced me to go into family practice.

While the primary intent of being a mentor is to challenge our less-experienced colleagues to think in new and different ways in order to optimize the care they deliver to their patients, the apprentice is not the only one who gains from this covenant. As mentors, we can help bridge the gap between generations that have varying workplace values and styles. As well, mentoring provides the opportunity to “pay back” into a system of which I am still very proud to be a part.

By sharing our knowledge, experience, and expertise, we learn. Teaching another helps us review and remember some of the facts or techniques we learned in medical school or residency that may have become a bit rusty over the years. We get to validate that which we already know, and will most likely come to the realization that we have accomplished far more than we

thought.

By serving as a mentor, we gain new insight from our apprentice. The person we are mentoring will have different knowledge and experiences than we do, perhaps teaching us a new skill along the way. Students will question what we are doing and ask us “why?” Mentoring gives us a fresh perspective on how we do our job on a daily basis, and through this process we learn more about ourselves.

As a bonus, we might just get some extra work completed, or do something we might otherwise not have time for. In some cases, our student can help with paperwork, get involved in a clinical project, or per-

haps do some research.

But the primary benefit of being a mentor is knowing that we left the world a better place than we found it. Taking the time to reach out to others, to share one's wisdom and life's experiences, and to instil confidence in another is probably the least expensive and most powerful way to change the world, one life at a time.

Students ask questions, test our knowledge, seek our advice and opinions—they keep us on our toes. In the long run, this benefits our professional development, which in turn benefits both our patients and our personal growth.

—Michael Golbey, MD
BCMA President

Upcoming Workshops - Fall 2005

presented by jack hirose & associates inc.

Western Canadian Conference on Addictions and Mental Health

Dr. Lisa Najavits, Ph.D., Dr. Charles Whitfield, MD, Dr. Richard Ries, MD, Dr. Dan Bilsker, Ph.D., Dr. Michael Leeds, Ph.D., Dr. Deb Corley, Ph.D., Dr. Ray Baker, MD, Dr. Graeme Cunningham, MD, Dr. Dan O'Connell, Ph.D., Jane Godfrey, Dr. Diane Rothon, MD, Victoria Maxwell, BFA, BPP

November 17-19, 2005, Vancouver, British Columbia

“New Frontiers in Trauma Treatment”

Dr. John Briere, Ph.D. &
Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, MD
December 5-7, 2005
Richmond, British Columbia

“Scared Stiff: Fast Effective Treatment for Anxiety Disorders”

Dr. David Burns, Ph.D.
November 21 & 22, 2005
Richmond, British Columbia

CEU Credits: Canadian Counseling Association, Association of Social Work Boards, Canadian Addiction Certification Board, Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Professionals, College of Family Physicians of Canada (MAINPRO M1 Credits)

For more information, or to register for a workshop, please visit our website at www.jackhirose.com, or contact us at:
1770 Orkney Place, North Vancouver, B.C. V7H 2Z1
Phone: (604) 924-0296 Toll Free: 1-800-456-5424
Fax: (604) 924-0239

jack hirose
& ASSOCIATES INC.
Quality workshops for mental health
and education professionals