I Still Need Guidance: Supplemental Advising for Persistence in Graduate Programs

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Welcome

- Background
- Overview:
  - Grads
  - My Office
  - Tools
  - Outcomes
- But first...
“Quality academic advising has frequently been cited as a major predictor of graduate student persistence.” (Polson, 1999)
What is Graduate School Really?

- Professional Development
- Advanced Curriculum
- Socialization
- Contribution to knowledge via research
- Beginning of actualizing career goals

- Subordination
- In-between identities
- Competing demands
- Unfamiliar territory
- May have to relearn how they learn or adjust how they learn

High degree of self efficacy, locus of control, grit and growth mindset, and confidence required to sustain (particularly PhD).
Grad Students: Identities

- Teacher
- Researcher
- Advisee
- Spouse
- Parent
- Daughter/Son
- Employee
- Self?
Graduate Student Major Issues

- Relational Issues (Family, Advisors)
- Isolation/Depression: Research indicates 13% of graduate students are affected by depression and anxiety (Wyatt & Oswalt, 2013).
  - Biomedical students: “more than six times as likely to experience depression and anxiety as compared to the general population,” (see Inside Higher Ed article)
- Financial Stress ($65,000)
- Career Planning
- Academic Challenges/ Failure
- Lack of healthy balance: Lack of healthy alignment
- My experience: Unprepared for independence and persistence needed for grad work
- Imposter Syndrome (see Gemma Correll illustrations!)

About JHSPH

- #1 School of Public Health*
- 10 Depts
- 2,600 students 79 countries/ 1400 Full Time
- Avg age 30- Millennial (19-34)
- 16-22 credits every 8 weeks
- Masters (one and two year programs) and PhD Programs
- 30% International Students
- 68% Female/ 32% Male

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The Office of Student Life
Personal Advising & Coaching
(opt in, not mandatory)

Providing support to promote a healthy balance between academics and personal life.

Topics: Time management, goal-setting, work-life balance, stress management

54 Students 176 appts (17/18 AY)
“Why did you initially contact the Office of Student Life?”

To share personal experiences and get help.
Dealing with a conflict in my personal life
To get advice regarding an issue with my advisor
Stress and difficulty in classes
New career advice
Feeling overwhelmed/struggling with getting through grad school
Counseling on career and life decisions
Career advising
Moral support and reaching for advice
Need for psychological and emotional support during a difficult time while in a program
Stress from academic and personal concerns.
Completely lost in the MPH journey, seeking strengths evaluation, guidance/direction/purpose
Stress with advising and performance/balance
victim of a crime
Feeling stuck
Wanted help dealing with triggered mental distress
Creating an Environment of Authenticity

- The Five Freedoms are:
  - The freedom to see and hear what is here, instead of what “should” be, was, or will be.
  - The freedom to say what you feel and think, instead of what you “should” feel and think.
  - The freedom to feel what you feel, instead of what you “ought” to feel.
  - The freedom to ask for what you want, instead of always waiting for permission.
  - The freedom to take risks on your own behalf, instead of choosing to be only “secure”.

- Virginia Satir
Adult Development Theories

- Life Span Perspective Theory
- Transition Perspective Theory

Gansmer-Topf, Ewing Ross, & Johnson, 2006
Life Span Perspective

Adult development viewed as uniquely individual and variable process
Shaped by life events and significance of events influenced by experience, culture, and gender
Non hierarchical
Gansmer-Topf, Ewing Ross, & Johnson, 2006
Transition Perspective Theory

Focuses on life events that bring about change
Emotional transition requires support
Magnitude of transition varies by individual
Anticipated, Unanticipated, and Nonevents

Gansmer-Topf, Ewing Ross, & Johnson, 2006
Tools for Coaching & Advising
Questions When Using Values-Based Advising

- Take your top ten values and define each of them as they apply to your life. Living interpretations vary from person to person. Example: For one person, the value identified as “fun” could apply to enjoying parties, for another it could be an approach taken to teaching/learning.

- Reflection Questions
  - Which values are currently evident in my life?
  - Which ones do I need to cultivate?
  - Can my values be cultivated in my current climate?
  - How and/or when do I express my values?

- Values and Time
  - How would I map out my time to reflect my values?
  - How can my gift of time become more productive and meaningful?
  - What are small changes I could make to live out my values?
  - What are bigger changes that need to be made?

- Explore what’s in the student’s not important column. It’s not uncommon for students to make decisions based on this column without realizing why.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths: What I Possess</th>
<th>Weaknesses: Areas of Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities: What’s in front of me</td>
<td>Threats: What hinders me from taking possession of opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SWOT for Paralysis
Questions Specifically for Graduate Students

1) When was the last time you felt energized by your work?
2) What would an ideal relationship look like between you and your advisor?
3) What are your expectations for yourself and for your degree program?
4) At the end of your masters/doctoral program, what will you have wanted to accomplish professionally/academically/personally?
5) Who is your support system and how have you shared your journey with them?
6) What does the imposter tell you about yourself?
7) What are your SMART goals for the week and what is your STRETCH goal?
8) How old are you when you relate to your advisor/professor/colleagues?
# Valuable Resources

## Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIA (Values in Action) Strengths Assessment</td>
<td>FREE! <a href="http://www.viacharacter.org">http://www.viacharacter.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values List (see uploads)</td>
<td><a href="https://motivationalinterviewing.org/personal-values-card-sort">https://motivationalinterviewing.org/personal-values-card-sort</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal SWOT Analysis (see uploads)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Tools.com (Free) Sample on next slide</td>
<td><a href="https://www.thecoachingtoolscompany.com/get-focused-includes-coaching-questions-infographic/">https://www.thecoachingtoolscompany.com/get-focused-includes-coaching-questions-infographic/</a></td>
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</table>

## Books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Braving the Wilderness (2017) &amp; I Thought It was Just Me (2007)</td>
<td>Brene Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindset the New Psychology of Success</td>
<td>Carol Dweck (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Corresponds with VIA Strengths Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women: Why Capable People Suffer</td>
<td>Valerie Young (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from the Impostor Syndrome and How to Thrive in Spite of It</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEARNERS (June 2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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GET FOCUSED!

Consider the Questions Below & Choose 3 Actions to Create More Focus!

GET CLEAR ON YOUR PRIORITIES
Clear priorities allow you to focus on what matters most. What are your top 3 priorities?

ENVIRONMENT
Distraction equals distraction. How could you improve your environment?

TIMERS
How could you use a timer to super-focus on a project, or limit time-sucks like email & social media?

FINISH WHAT YOU START
Avoid brain fog and overwhelm. When & where could you do that little bit extra, and get things finished?

ONE THING AT A TIME
Where does multitasking reduce your focus? Do one thing well instead of several things distractedly?

COURAGE TO SAY "NO"
Where could you say 'No' more? When we say 'Yes' to someone else, it often means saying 'No' to something in our own life...

UNDERSTAND YOUR FOCUS-BOOSTERS!
What boosts your focus? A cup of coffee, stroking a pet, using headphones, classical music or taking a stretch break.

SELF-CARE
Do you ignore your needs and then end up distracting yourself instead? Where could more self-care increase your focus?

ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS
When focus is required you need zero tolerance for distractions. What are the top 3 ways you distract yourself?

DISCIPLINE
When chosen freely, discipline is uplifting & inspiring! Where do you need to be more disciplined in service of you?

FINALLY, CHOOSE 3 ACTIONS TO CREATE MORE FOCUS IN YOUR LIFE:

I WILL:

SUCCEED IN LIFE!

Boost Your Success & Happiness With These Powerful Ideas!

Which of these 12 Areas Resonate Most with You?

HOLD TIGHT TO YOUR VALUES
Learn to make choices and decisions that align with your values.

ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE!
Reduce mental & physical distractions. Declutter your, your work & home!

WHAT MATTERS MOST?
What’s most important in life? Know your priorities & take care of these first!

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
You matter! Stand up for yourself, take care of your needs & make time for physical and emotional self-care.

OVERCOME FEAR OF FAILURE
If we worry about failure, we won’t achieve much. Instead, remember that mistakes always lead to learning.

SIMPLIFY!
To succeed and enjoy life we must keep things simple!

UNIQUELY YOU
Make an impression, and enjoy life by using your unique strengths & talents whenever possible!

CREATE SUPPORTIVE HABITS
Habits are what we do without thinking. What habits can you create that will support and lead you to success?

CHANNEL YOUR INNER WARRIOR
Be determined and persevere! What goals and dreams will you fight for?

EXCEED EXPECTATIONS
Exceed expectations to stand out in life!

EXPRESS YOURSELF!
What you wear affects how people see and treat you. Find a style that represents who you are!

JUST DO WHAT IS DIFFICULT
Stop procrastinating! Instead grow in confidence, stature and achieve success by just doing what’s hard!
Resilient Practitioner (Book)

1) Exercises and strategies for anyone who is a helper.
2) Great with students in service-based fields. Promotes self care early on.
One page summaries and short videos on resources to help with creativity, innovation, design, productivity, motivation...

The Productivity Game
(See Youtube)

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**Q4: Number of times you've met for an appointment during this academic year:**

- Answered: 18  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 or more</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I also plan on returning for a future session this academic year.</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Respondents: 18**
Q5: Please rate your agreement with the following statements regarding your experience in meeting with the OSL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt respected as an individual.</td>
<td>94.44%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt safe in sharing my thoughts, questions, concerns.</td>
<td>94.44%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My problems and concerns were understood in the sessions.</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The one-on-one sessions helped me develop valuable skills for</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.56</td>
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Q5: Please rate your agreement with the following statements regarding your experience in meeting with the OSL.

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<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned more about myself as a result of meeting with Student Life.</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sessions aided me in working with my faculty advisors/doctoral committee members.</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The meetings helped me cope with the stress associated with being a graduate student.</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q7: Please indicate the type of degree program in which you are enrolled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Degree</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two Thank You’s

I got to talk to my boss today and we were able to move past the project obstacles and work out a short term and long term plan for me. I feel much better and will get to go to India in Nov-Dec!!! Thank you very much for all your help! It has made a tremendous difference in how I approach conflicts.

2\textsuperscript{nd} Year Masters Student

Reporting back! I had a quick 5-minute call with my advisor today because she wanted to talk sooner than Monday. She actually apologized and agreed to not put that kind of pressure on me again. She was super human! The power of words. Thanks so much for being a great cheerleader and the ongoing support.

\textbf{See you next week.}

4\textsuperscript{th} Year PhD Candidate
Change in Culture/Community
+ Change in Pace
+ Academic Demands
+ Personal Obligations
+ Expectations of Self

Overwhelmed Grad Students
Graduate student advising is about seeing students up close:

in the context of their story
as individuals
as professionals
as valuable
Questions for the Audience

- What’s unique about your graduate population? How would you describe your climate?
- How would graduate students describe the culture or environment?
- How do you engage with your students? Hi touch? Low touch?


A graduate student’s worth Current Biology, Volume 28, Issue 16, 20 August 2018, Pages r850-r852 Christie L. Sampson, Brett M. Frye, Michael A. Carlo

Inside Higher Ed article: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/06/new-study-says-graduate-students-mental-health-crisis