

Fellows in Profile
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My career in eating disorders began during my childhood in Chicago. Growing up chubby and being raised by a chronic dieter sensitized me at a very young age to be concerned about what I ate and what I looked like. By the time I got to high school I had already been on Weight Watchers more than once, and was well on my way to being a chronic dieter myself. When I was a senior, a very good friend of mine became anorexic, and the eating disorder therapist in me was born. Although I was still convinced that thin was better than fat, I knew induced starvation was terribly wrong, and I talked to her for hours, day after day, desperately trying to talk her out of her illness. Unfortunately, my attempts were unsuccessful. This friend went on to much more disturbing forms of self-destruction, obviously ill far beyond what just a friend would be able to help her with.

My interest in psychology flourished in college, as did my weight fluctuations, and I lost and gained the same 20 pounds over and over again. Then, the summer before my senior year, I worked at a local psychiatric hospital, doing research for inpatient programming. One of the topics I studied was eating disorders. Although I recognized more of my friend than myself in these papers, I knew that this was the field I wanted to pursue. A lot of the research was authored by a local psychologist, Dr. Craig Johnson. Craig Johnson was the first person I called when I graduated college, and soon I was scoring and coding the very research data I had read about only a year before.

I worked for Craig and his team (including Dr. David Tobin, Dr. Mary Connors and Dr. Susan Love) for the two years before starting graduate school, and during the following 4 years of my graduate training at Northwestern. I also worked on the inpatient psychiatric unit at Northwestern under Dr. Alan Goodsitt and Dr. Jesse Viner, as a mental health worker. I developed as the quintessential scientist/practitioner. I was intimately involved in research, studying the adaptive function of bingeing and purging in mood regulation. I also learned how to combine symptom management with insight-oriented psychotherapy in the treatment of eating disorders. I learned a few personal lessons, as well. The team would have a research meeting every Wednesday morning over breakfast at a local diner. Still hanging onto the illusion that I could one day achieve and maintain an unrealistically thin weight, my breakfast often consisted of cereal with skim milk, or cottage cheese and fruit, and the overuse of margarine and *Sweet n' Low*. Several months into these meetings my colleagues finally did an intervention, challenging me to use real sugar and butter, and opening up my eyes to the wisdom of intuitive eating. The Health At All Sizes activist was born that day in that diner.

My eating disorder education continued in my work after graduate school at the Institute of Living and Elmcrest Hospital, both in Connecticut. Dr. Lisa Berzins and Dr. Margo Maine took me under their wings, teaching me the ins and outs of inpatient and partial hospital treatment of eating disorders, program management and marketing. At the same time, the Academy for Eating Disorders was in its inception, and Craig facilitated my association with it. I worked on the Budget committee with Dr. Amy Dennis, learning

some of the financial challenges in running an international organization. The International Conference and IJED continued to further my knowledge in the field. Being inducted as a Founding Fellow of the Academy was one of the proudest moments of my life. Although I was unable to be present at many of those early meetings the other Founders reminisce about, Craig kept me informed behind the scenes.

Ultimately I moved to a suburb of Milwaukee. Respecting my Chicago roots and the professional training that I received on the East Coast, I have a part-time private practice, doing individual and group psychotherapy, as well as supervision and consultation. Although the community I work in is small compared to the ones I trained in, there is no shortage of young women starving themselves physically and emotionally, all in the name of thinness. I also began teaching a graduate course in the treatment of eating disorders this summer, and after countless hours of preparation (thank you Michael Levine and Mary Connors for your support, and everyone else who posted their syllabus on the AED website-mine will be there shortly), I nostalgically found myself combining a lot of the new and exciting research from evidence-based psychotherapies with much of the classic articles and book chapters written by Craig, Michael Strober, Hilde Bruch and Alan Goodsitt. I also do a fair amount of writing and public speaking, both professionally and in the community, and hope to one day publish a book. I am a passionate advocate of the Health at all Sizes approach, teaching my patients (and frankly, anyone else who will listen to me) about the virtues of intuitive eating, positive body image, holistic health and the joys of movement. Personal circumstances in my life have even led me to incorporate principles of Logotherapy and Existential therapy in my work, as another way to help people move beyond their illness and expand the meaning and purpose of their lives. Although there is much I have found to do in addition to my work (needlepoint and a healthy addiction to “The Sopranos”, to name a few), I live and breathe this work, and could do nothing else. Craig wrote in my graduate school recommendation letter that I was a “born therapist”, and he could not have been more right. My life’s mission is helping young women and men accept themselves, take good care of themselves, and not be victims of conformity and abusive relationships. I am grateful to all of my mentors, and The Academy, for nurturing me, educating me and picking up where I leave off in that mission.