



Case Notes

Al Mahrer receives CWRU Clinical Psychology Award for Distinguished Alumni

Alvin R. Mahrer, Ph.D., graduated with his B.S. degree from Western Reserve University in 1949. He earned his PhD in clinical psychology in 1954 from the Ohio State University, and he went to work at the VA Hospital in Denver, and became president of the Colorado Psychological Association.

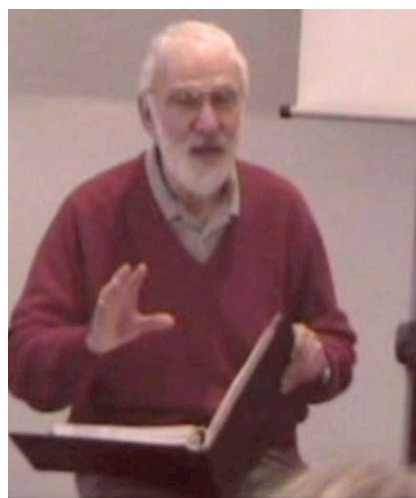
In 1967, Al became professor and clinical director at Miami University, and later, he held the same positions at the University of Waterloo, and then at the University of Ottawa, where he remained until his retirement.

It is with great sadness that I report that Al Mahrer passed away April 2014. I had tried calling

Al just two days before his passing, but his health had been failing for quite some time. Al was a long-time member of the editorial board for the Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy, and I developed a close bond with Al over the years. Al was outspoken, creative, and had a lively sense of humor.

Over the course of his long and productive career, Al earned many distinctions and accolades, including: the Rollo May Award for Pursuit of New Frontiers from the American Psychological Association Division 32, the Living Legend in Psychotherapy Award, from APA Division 29, the Distinguished Psychologist Award from APA Division 29, and the Award for Excellence in Research from the University of Ottawa.

Throughout his life, Al remained a prolific author. Beyond his numerous journal articles, Al published an impressive array of books, including: Transformation: A Glimpse Into The Future Of How Change Will Come About (2011), The Origin Of A Person (2010), What Is Psychotherapy For? An Alternative To The Profession Of Psychotherapy (2010), The Optimal Person (2009), The Manual of Optimal Behavior (2008), How Psychotherapy Can Become A Science (2007), and The Creation of New Ideas in Psychotherapy (2006).



I sincerely hope we will all remember Al for his contributions to the field, as well as a genuine and caring person. He will be missed.

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Spotlight on Alumni – Abby Braden



Dr. Abby Braden shares her thoughts:

Current Position:

I am currently in my third year as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of California, San Diego, where I work at the Center for Healthy Eating and Activity Research (CHEAR). CHEAR is a multidisciplinary clinic that includes psychologists, physicians, and student trainees. At CHEAR, we have two primary goals: 1) to optimize currently available approaches for treatment of obesity and 2) identify highly novel targets for the treatment of people who are obese, based on findings from basic behavioral sciences and neuroscience. As a post-doctoral fellow, I have several research and clinical responsibilities which include coordinating a randomized clinical trial for childhood obesity, serving as a study interventionist and assessor, providing formal clinical supervision, manuscript writing, and grant writing. My research goals focus on

improving behavioral treatments for overweight adults, with a focus on adults with emotional disorders. I am particularly interested in emotional eating, or eating in response to negative and positive emotions, as a contributing factor to obesity.

Best parts about my job:

The best part of my current job is that it is a true blend of clinical and research duties. Additionally, the learning environment is invigorating. I am surrounded by trainees and colleagues at various levels of training with differing areas of expertise. We are constantly developing and implementing new ideas which keeps my job exciting and interesting.

Breakdown of time:

25% clinical; 60% research (although it's clinical research so I still spend a great deal of time with research participants in my work on behavioral interventions); 15% administrative

Greatest professional accomplishment:

Last August, I received a National Institute of Health Loan Repayment Award. In order to be selected in the program, applicants must be involved in research for at least 50% of their time. Applicants are chosen based on research qualifications and evidence of a commitment to a research career. The program pays a significant amount of money toward my student loans each year! This has been a wonderful benefit, and I am very grateful for having been chosen. I would encourage other students to consider this program upon graduation. I am also proud to say that I submitted a training grant to the National Institute of Health last June. Writing a grant is a huge endeavor, and I learned a great deal from the experience!

Spotlight on Dr. Abby Braden - cntd

Advice:

My advice to a new graduate student would be to learn to be efficient with your time. You will work very hard as a graduate student, but do not allow your work to consume you. Learn to set boundaries and maintain a personal life that is separate from your work as a student. I would also advise students to be prepared for your graduate training to be incredibly trying at times. Anxiety, disappointment, and doubt are just a part of the process! It is normal to question yourself and whether being a psychologist is what you truly want to do. Like anything though, the discomfort reduces with time and the joy and pride that you find in your work will likely come. Seek support from your classmates! I found this to be really helpful and normalizing.

Favorite memories from graduate school:

I still remember meeting my cohort for the very first time, before orientation! I really enjoyed building close relationships with other students. I still remember the long office conversations and the nights out with the girls. Those are the memories that stick out fondly in my mind.

What was your dissertation on:

My dissertation examined life meaning in a sample of chronically depressed Veterans. We found that life meaning was significantly associated with depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation and that life meaning was predictive of hopelessness at a 3-month follow-up.

What was most difficult in completing dissertation:

For me, the hardest part about the dissertation was preparing for the defense. I found myself trying to predict the comments and questions, and worrying about how to respond. I still remember being reminded that I knew my study better than anyone else, and to remember that when preparing for the defense.

Internship:

I moved to San Diego where attended the University of California, San Diego internship program. My rotations were completed at the San Diego VA. Half of my time was spent in the mood disorders clinic with depressed veterans and the other half was spent working in chronic pain and weight management. Internship was an exciting time in my training because it was an opportunity to blend my background in depression with my emerging interest in obesity and weight management. As an intern, I found that I was ready to refine my clinical skills and develop a professional identity.

Personal Life: My husband and I moved to San Diego in the summer of 2011, when I started my internship training program. We love living in San Diego – the sunny skies, beach, and laid back vibe have been a blessing. We also had our first child, Hank, in August of 2014. Balancing being a new mom and a professional have been challenging so far, but thankfully I am in a position that is sensitive to the transition.

Dr. Jack Nassau share his thoughts:

My current title is Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at the Alpert Brown Medical School

In addition, I serve as the Chief of Psychology Hasbro Children's Partial Hospital Program Rhode Island Hospital/Hasbro Children's Hospital

I live in Barrington, RI with my wife Debra and our two teenage daughters, Rachel and Jessica.

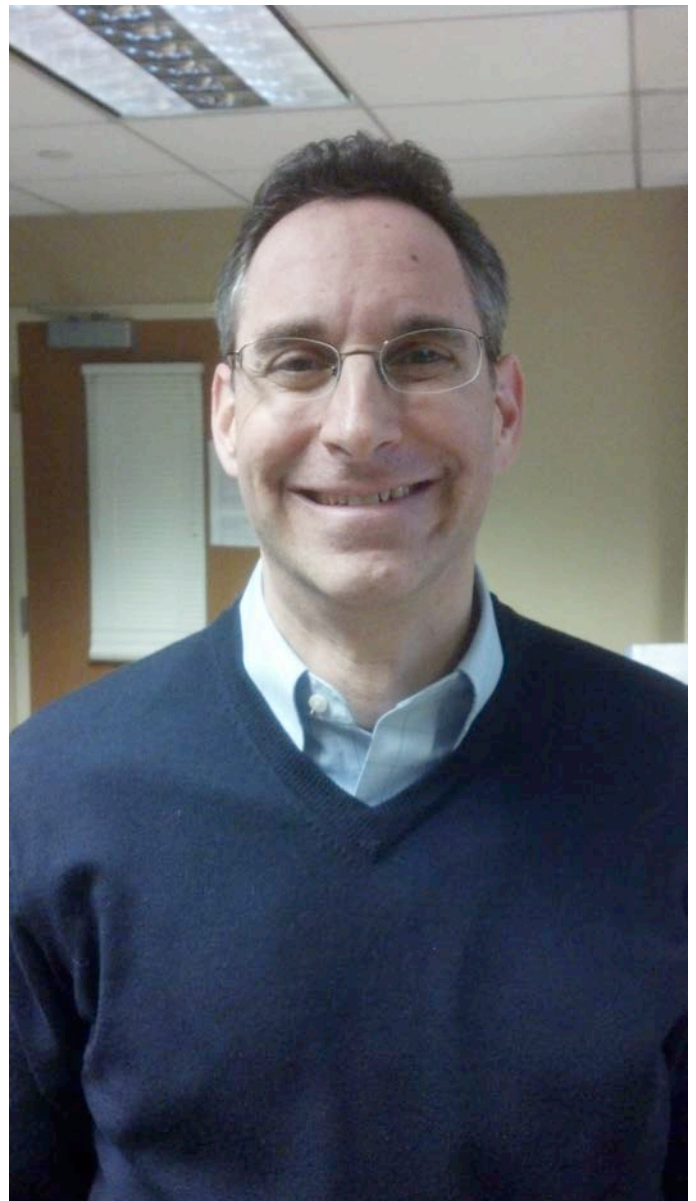
Upon leaving CWRU in the Summer of 1995 (oh my, that's almost 20 years ago!), I did an internship year at Boston Children's Hospital and then a postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University/RI Hospital. I continue to work at RI Hospital/Hasbro Children's Hospital to this day.

Career Changes:

Over the years, I have conducted research related to stress and immunity in pediatric asthma, psychosocial aspects of pediatric IBD, and family beliefs systems in chronic pediatric illness. I became interested in relaxation training and biofeedback for children with pain disorders while I was on internship and have continued that clinical practice throughout my career.

I am now Chief Psychologist in the Hasbro Children's Partial Hospital Program. The HCPHP is a day treatment program for children with medical and psychological issues.

Our team of pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, dieticians, milieu therapists, physical therapists, and education specialists employs a family systems model to empower families to gain control over the child's illness and live their lives more fully. The work is challenging and fulfilling!



Spotlight on Alumni – Jack Nassau - cntd

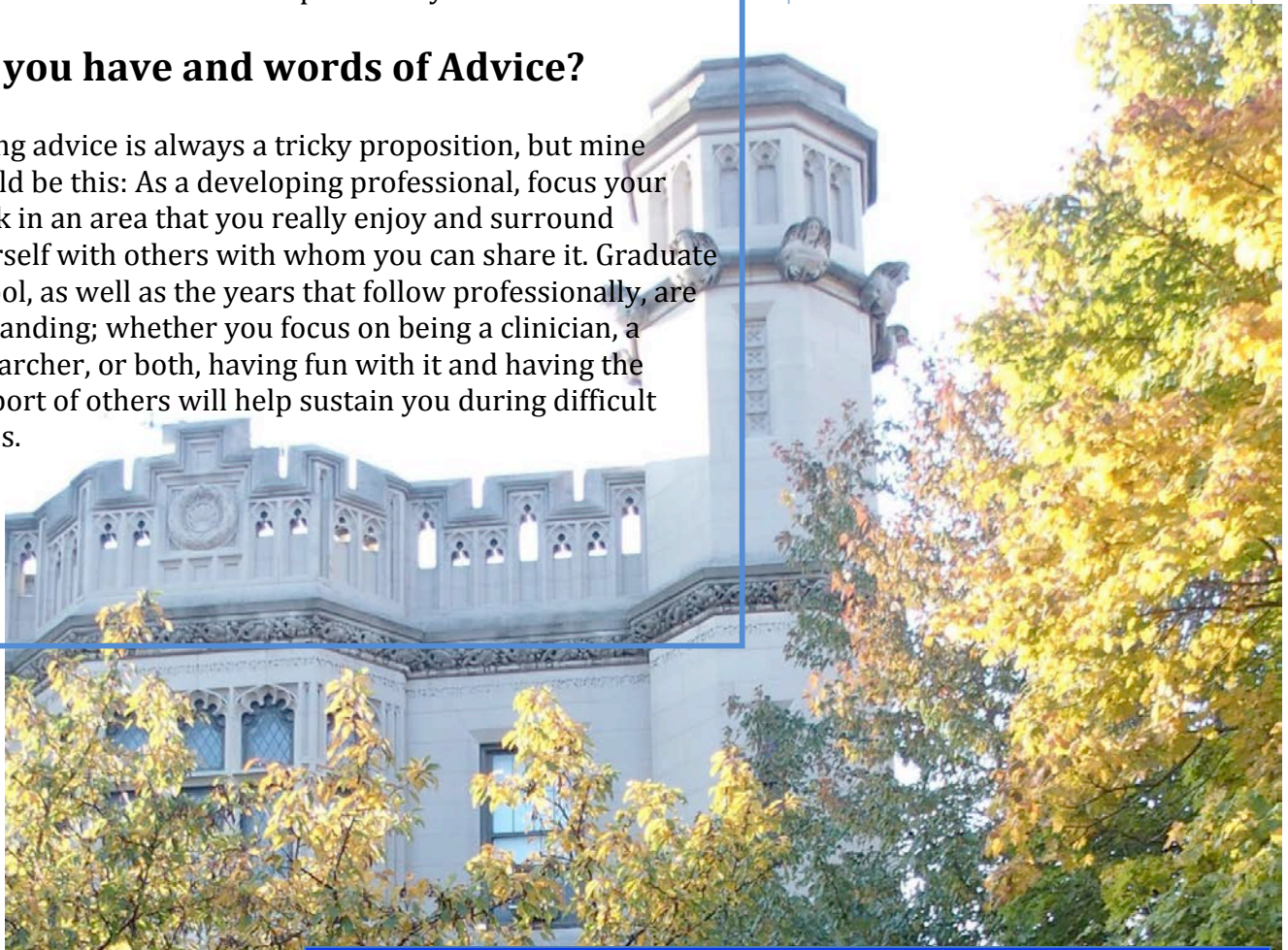
What are your memories of grad school?

I look back fondly at my time at CWRU as I know it helped prepare me for what I enjoy doing now. Not only did I receive terrific mentoring as a pediatric psychology trainee, I also had a lot of fun! For those of you that may not know, Dr. Overholser (Jim) (whom I had met at Brown when I was an undergrad and he was finishing his postdoctoral fellowship before heading to CWRU) and Dr. Drotar (Denny) (who was my primary mentor at CRWU) recruited me and other students to play touch football on Sunday mornings. This was a great tradition, and we played rain, shine, or snow, always in good fun trying to keep the injuries to a minimum. These “sporting events” (I also played softball with Denny and joined a co-ed soccer league), along with time with my classmates, were a great balance to the classroom and clinical and research activities that otherwise kept me busy.

Do you have any words of Advice?

Giving advice is always a tricky proposition, but mine would be this: As a developing professional, focus your work in an area that you really enjoy and surround yourself with others with whom you can share it. Graduate school, as well as the years that follow professionally, are demanding; whether you focus on being a clinician, a researcher, or both, having fun with it and having the support of others will help sustain you during difficult times.

“Focus your work in an area that you really enjoy”



Meet the First Years!

During the fall of 2014, Case Western Reserve's clinical psychology program welcomed five new graduate students: Alison Athey from Boston College will be working with Jim Overholser, Alex Rothbaum from the University of Georgia will be working with Norah

Feeny, Glen Dawson from the University of North Carolina will be working with Arin Connell, Alex Uzdavines from UC-Irvine will be working with Julie Exline, Olena Zyga from CWRU will be working with Sandy Russ.

We welcome our new students and hope everyone has a great year in 2012!

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To Internship and Beyond...

Advanced Students apply for Internship

We will have 6 advanced students leaving the program soon, as they focus on applying for their internship year. Students applying in 2015 are: Jess Alva, Jess Nasser, Erin Clifton, Rachael Cooper, Josh Grubbs, and Emily Patton. We are certain they will all find a good home for internship training.



We currently have 4 graduate students on internship:

- Stephanie Keller at the Charleston Consortium,

- Susan Klosterman at Dupont Hospital,

- Nikki Pucci at Adolescent Behavioral Health, and

- Suzanne Gorovoy at the University of Arizona.

We wish them the best of luck as they move forward with their careers!

Program News

Julie Exline will be finishing her tour of duty as the Director of Clinical Training, and beginning July 1, 2015, Norah Feeny will take the helm of the clinical program. A sincere Thank you goes to both of them for their diligence and hard work on the innumerable chores that come with this leadership position.

Clinical Program News

During fall semester 2014, the CWRU graduate training program in clinical psychology was re-inspected by the American Psychological Association. The program received strong positive feedback, and we expect the official word from APA to be very positive. The CWRU program is one of the oldest accredited programs in the country, now receiving continuous accreditation since February 1, 1948. Congratulations to Julie and everyone who helped with the massive amount of paperwork. Thanks to all alumni who completed the surveys.