



Maryland Career Development Association

September 2020 Newsletter

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President's Message

Greetings MCDA members and fellow career practitioners,

It's hard to believe we are almost six months into the pandemic. Many of us can probably relate to feeling like we've been cycling through Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Although there are positive signs in the race to develop a coronavirus vaccine and in the economy and job market, there is also still so much volatility and uncertainty that lies ahead. At the same time, we are grappling with major crises on multiple other fronts - a racial reckoning, natural disasters and extreme weather due to climate change, and a deeply politically divided nation on the verge of one of the most consequential presidential elections in modern history. That's certainly enough to test anyone's resilience.

Close to twenty years ago, I had the unique opportunity to contribute to the 9/11 Recovery Program of the American Red Cross. As you can imagine, working on issues related to trauma day in and day out can take its toll. From that experience, I learned firsthand the direct impact mental health can have on our physical health and the critical importance of self-care. While it may feel like our resilience is currently being tested daily, the good news is that each one of us has the power to become more resilient and in spite of all these challenges, we can do so by incorporating practical habits into our everyday lives. Not only is this important for our own well-being, but it is critical for the well-being of our families, our communities, the clients we serve and the organizations for which we work. I hope you will join me on Friday, September 11th for a mindful power hour in which we'll explore [7 Habits of Highly Resilient People: Practical, Evidence-based Ways to Boost Resilience During Challenging Times](#).

In the months ahead, MCDA will seek to do its best to support our members by providing relevant learning opportunities on salient topics and exploring creative new ways to engage our members and strengthen and build our community. Please help us in this effort by becoming actively engaged and involved. One way you can do so is by checking out [Tribe](#), our new online knowledge sharing community, a place for members to share resources and network with each other in a virtual environment. (All MCDA members were sent an email invitation on August 24th. You may want to check your spam/junk folder.) We have also recently set up an online video repository which will store and house recordings of our webinars for members to access.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to welcome two outstanding and talented professionals to MCDA, Desvan Moody and Micheal McGee. Both Desvan and Micheal have been named as Emerging Leaders in our

umbrella organization, the [Maryland Counseling Association's Emerging Leaders Program](#). They will be serving MCDA during this program year, and I know they will both be huge assets to our community. You can learn more about both Desvan and Micheal in this month's newsletter.

Warm regards,

Julie Neill

MCDA President



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Member Spotlight ~ Natasha OrtizFortier, MCDA President-Elect

Interview conducted by Rachel Look, MCDA Newsletter Committee Chair and Editor

Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking with Natasha OrtizFortier, MCDA President-Elect. Since 2015, she has been the Founder and Chief Career Strategist of The Creative Career Chic, a career advising, strategy, training and professional development company. She's also a career consultant at the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University (JHU).

Can you share a bit more about why you decided to start your own company, the types of clients you serve and what you find most gratifying about it?

I started my own company in 2015 after attending a conference and realized that much of career counseling wasn't delivered holistically or integrated into other areas of a client's life. I enjoy working with clients who are, as I like to say, careerly confused and /or feel stuck. I am passionate about advising my clients who are working through a transition and helping them determine what success looks like for them on their own terms. I especially enjoy working with women who are working moms, like myself. Despite being in the middle of a pandemic, I feel like I am living the dream. My schedule is flexible and I can be there for my kids. To create and reimagine career goals with individual clients, deliver workshops to diverse audiences as well as create and develop new ideas and create from who I am as an individual is exciting. I especially like the ability to facilitate a shift in a client's thinking and be a messenger in that way—hearing a client say, 'it never occurred to me...' I assist my clients to see themselves differently and know that they can deploy their talents and skills sets in many different ways (#abundantpossibilities). I'm fortunate to be able to use my gifts and talents in that way.

Your career spans working in academia, the private sector, as well as different volunteer organizations. What career accomplishment are you most proud of?

I was afraid to start my own business and have the belief in myself to do it. I am extremely proud of creating my own business. That I have been a successful entrepreneur for five years and I am an inspiration to my sons, makes me very proud.

We are living in challenging times--many people have lost their jobs. What advice would you give your career development colleagues navigating these uncertain times?

Like many during this pandemic, I had to pause. Many have the goal to be more productive, and check things off the list, etc. I encourage everyone to reflect upon what do you want to produce more of—post Covid? The goal might be maintaining healthy habits or spending more quality time with family. Where do you want to create value that is most valuable to you and not for anyone else? Creating the space and time to do a deep dive, mentally and emotionally, is an important practice. These Covid times have, for better or worse, created this opportunity. When you find that place, you will begin to see more of what's possible and be able to cultivate and attract more of what you desire in your life. My mantra during these challenging times: make progress, perfection is not required.

The MCDA has new leadership and you are the President-Elect. What are you most excited about for MCDA moving forward?

I like the energy of MCDA and everyone's different focus areas within the field of career development. As a new Board, we are exploring how we can best serve our members. Specifically, how can we engage and connect with members? We plan to grow our membership, based on what we hear from MCDA members. My motivation to join MCDA was to begin to mentor young people in this profession. I love this work. It is a great career. How do we help emerging leaders? I'm excited about developing a mentoring partnership program within MCDA.

Can you share one thing you'd like MCDA members (and potential members) to know about you?

I'd love to hear from you. Please connect with me for a coffee chat or phone call, via email at info@creativecareerchic.com or IM on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/creativecareerchic/> I can't promise I will be able to meet with everyone, but I will try!



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Emerging Leaders Spotlight

Desvan L. Moody

I remember my first day stepping onto a college campus. Not as a student, but as a first-year admission counselor. After four years in a corporate communications role, this moment was my new beginning: was my first experience in education. I was ready for the challenge ahead, and so began my journey. I never imagined I would become a counselor, but through a series of events and experiences, I am here with a purpose.

As a Baltimore native, I left my city running away from the things about Baltimore I did not understand. Little did I know those experiences would teach me resilience, compassion, and love, and eventually would inspire my return. Now, more than ever, our youth need passionate, loving, and quality counselors in schools to ensure they develop into adults able to handle everything life throws at them. As a student at Loyola University Maryland's School Counseling program, I returned home to learn how to make a difference in the lives of children in our beautiful city. I know that every experience I've endured has directed me to this profession, and I am excited for the future of the field of counseling

When I reflect on my collegiate and career experiences, I instantly think about those that helped me achieve success in my life thus far. As a first-generation college student, the attainment of a college degree is a collective achievement, celebrated by all those that supported me through college. I owe them a great deal for pouring their knowledge, support, and care into me. Thirteen years later, I've returned to Baltimore in pursuit of a passion that grew like a rose from concrete. If I knew then what I know now, I would have chosen my current career a long time ago. That is why I feel the work I do in college access and attainment means so much to me. This work is personal. I know first-hand the difference we can make when we invest in a student's future.

As an *Emerging Leader* through the Maryland Counseling Association, I aspire to develop as an advocate for diversifying the school counseling profession. Representation matters, and as a school counseling student, I see the necessity of my presence in the role of a counselor. I see the necessity of more representation, period. When I look across my classroom at Loyola, it is inspiring to see this representation in my fellow counseling students. It is my goal to be a beacon of light in our community, to inspire the next generation of counseling professionals. The work we do every day impacts lives not only today but for generations to come.

Desvan L. Moody is a Baltimore native, and alumnus of Baltimore City College with over four years of college admissions experience. Desvan earned his undergraduate degree from York College of Pennsylvania in 2012. He is currently a graduate student at Loyola University in the School Counseling program. He is also part of the

[Maryland Counseling Association's Emerging Leaders Program](#). Desvan's research has focused on increasing the social and emotional skills of English Language Learners in Baltimore through a summer youth program; a collaboration with the Esperanza Center of Baltimore and Loyola University Maryland. In his free time, he enjoys biking, gardening, reading and studying African American history.



Emerging Leaders Spotlight

Micheal McGee

Micheal McGee is a healthcare management professional with a B.S. degree in Psychology. He is currently enrolled in the Graduate Counseling Psychology Program at Bowie State University. Micheal has worked in senior management positions in the disability field for over 20 years, serving people from diverse populations with developmental/intellectual disabilities and mental health disorders. Some of his previous roles include, Director of Residential Services (Epic/SMVI), Director of Employment Services (MVLE), Mid-Atlantic Executive Director (Sunrise Community Services), and Executive Director (United Cerebral Palsy of Maryland).

Micheal also gives back passionately to his community through many organizations, a few of which include the Atikal Foundation, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for foster youth, the Disability Equality, Diversity, Rights and Inclusion Forum, the Small Business Owners Group, and the Maryland Counseling Association, where he is part of the part of the [Maryland Counseling Association's Emerging Leaders Program](#). He is also Board Member (President 2020-2021) for the Graduate Student Association at Bowie State University.



For this issue of the newsletter he shared this poem with MCDA.

Today I Cried, by Micheal McGee

I was told for years not to cry, little boy dry your eyes, toughen up be a man, to survive look away bury your head in the sand. Stay peaceful it will be okay, but in today's racial climate I just can't look away. Although I was told tears will make you soft, at age 48 I cried today for all the black men we've lost.

I'm now angered that it took me this long to shed my tears, and admit that I was taught wrong all of these years.

The tears of a man doesn't show weakness; it proves you are strong, that you have emotions, and you care about the difference between right and the difference between wrong.

How can I just be peaceful and look away when I look into the mirror I am Black every day. Too afraid to go out and enjoy life wherever I go, afraid that if the police pull me over, my life becomes a news link from a video exposed.

Yes, today I cried out loud and long, no longer ashamed, I feel emboldened, and strong!

I say to the world allow your tears to lead the way, embrace your emotions and also pray.

Pray that this will be the last day that a young black man's life will be stolen away.

My people don't just cry, protest, and march...we must battle this war of racial inequality strategically and carry a warrior's heart.

We are stronger together than we are apart, we must vote in all elections locally, statewide, and nationally if we want a new start! It's not just enough to stand and speak out loud about what's right and what's wrong, we must coordinate our efforts and advocate as if we were excited about a new Beyonce song.

Social media must be our bullhorn to expose the corrupt, no longer can we rely on a government who uses batons, tear gas, and a knee on or neck to shut us up!

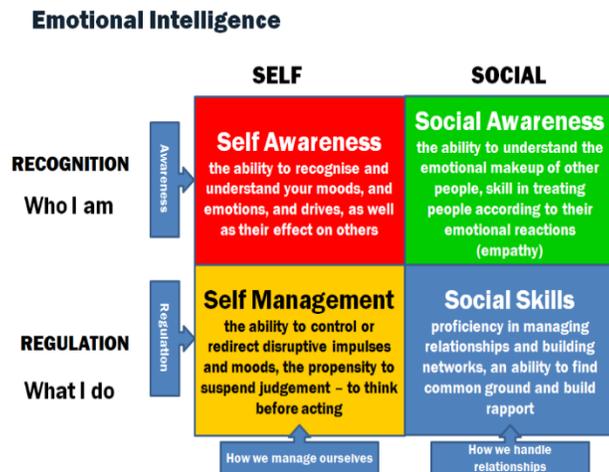
Yes, today I cried and it broke my heart, but these tears unequivocally will be my new start!

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Self-Care: A Key Component to Surviving the Pandemic

by Karol Taylor, GCDFI, CSP, CCMC, JCTC, CCC, CBBS

Federal Career Counselor



I married you for better or worse but not for lunch. How often have you laughed at this joke? It's funny, right? Is it still funny after five months of sheltering in place while teleworking? While we love our family and we love our job, months of confinement to relatively small spaces can be wearying. What can we do to make sure we are handling things effectively and practicing self-care? What can we do to increase our Emotional Intelligence (EQ) while we are in a situation that baffles and perplexes us, and requires new behavior?

In July, Fast Company published an online article entitled *5 Ways to Boost Your Emotional Energy Each Day* by Harvey Deutschendorf, an EQ expert

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90535516/5-simple-ways-to-boost-your-emotional-intelligence-every-day>.

Harvey's five energy boosters are: 1) become more aware of your feelings, 2) listen more, 3) avoid monologues, 4) take a brief time out when needed, and 5) review your day.

Become More Aware of Your Feelings

Harvey says to check in with yourself to see how you are feeling a few times each day. See if you can name your feelings at that moment; this will increase your self-awareness. You may recall the thermostat exercise from the first edition of Career Nuggets. (If you don't have it, please email CareerHorizons@sec.gov and ask for a copy.) The thermostat exercise asks you to notice if you are in a downward spiral and to "reset" your emotional "thermostat" to a positive direction.

Listen More

Mind Tools, a communications web site <https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>, says we listen for the following reasons: 1) obtain information, 2) understand, 3) enjoyment, and 4) to learn. It also says that we only retain 25-50% of what we hear. That means your boss hears about half of what you say, and you only hear about half of what your boss says. To hear more, you need to practice active listening.

Active Listeners make a conscious effort to pay attention to both your words and the feelings behind them. They fully receive the intended message. This is not the way most of us are used to listening, so it requires strong self-management skills. Listen closely and carefully to the person speaking; challenge yourself to stay in the moment. Avoid developing a response while the other person is speaking. Do this over and over until active listening becomes a habit.

Avoid Monologues

Monologue is defined as a long, tedious speech by one person during a conversation. You don't want to be that person. Self-Awareness will allow you to interact effectively with loved ones. Focusing on the things they do right rather than the things that need improvement is key. Invite your family into conversation. Pay attention to the things that are important to your family members and ask about them. Do your best to practice active listening skills and actually hear what those around you are saying. You don't have to agree or disagree, just listen. The gift of listening is deeply needed during the confusion of a pandemic.

Take a Brief Time-Out When Needed

Everyone gets overwhelmed and occasionally needs a time out. Find your “happy place” in your home or at a nearby outside venue where you can be by yourself for a moment. It’s important to be able to clear your mind and regroup. You do not want to be managed by your emotions, you want to be able to manage them. Finding a way to stay calm and focused will help you to handle your feelings more effectively.

Review Your Day

“Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.” ---Ralph Waldo Emerson

Self-awareness and self-efficacy are deeply important at this time. Having your own time and space can make all the difference. Self-management requires that you take care of your own needs first, so you have the energy to take care of the needs of others. You want to be present for them, so why not practice behaviors to support that attitude? You love them, they love you; you need them, they need you. Practice as much self-care as possible because, as you are currently experiencing, you did, indeed, “marry” them for lunch.



Karol Taylor has been a member of MACD/MCA and MCDA for more than 17 years, 13 as an MCDA Board member and executive leader, and 8 on the MACD/MCA Board. Karol is an award-winning expert in the federal job search, but she also has expertise in leadership and organizational development. The emergence of COVID-19 motivated Karol to consider how people might respond in the new telework-place.

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Newsletter Article Submissions

MCDA welcomes article submissions on topics of interest to the career practitioner community. We are seeking articles that address emerging trends, best practices (especially as we navigate these uncertain times) and training opportunities. For best consideration, please submit articles (maximum length 700 words, although shorter is preferred) by the 15th of the month prior to the desired month of publication. The newsletter will be published monthly, on the 1st of the month. The article deadline for the October issue is September 15th. For article submissions or questions, please email: Rachel Look, Editor, MCDA.Newsletter@MDCareers.org

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