

Growing Your Personal Interests



Creating Joy via Your Personal Interests (and perhaps revitalizing your career too)

Tuesday, April 25, 12-1 PM

Do you engage with an activity that provides joy and revives your spirit? In this workshop, our panelists discuss how their leisure activities have led to increased well-being; occasionally, these interests can circle back to an enhanced professional identity. Workshop attendees are welcome to email any related topics or questions in advance of the session so our panelists can address them.

Moderator: Hans Oettgen, MD, PhD, Academic Dean for BCH and OFD Director; Associate Chief, Division of Immunology, and Professor of Pediatrics at HMS (outside interest: bird photography)

Panelists:

Eman Ansari, MD, MPH – interest in literature/reading has led to the formation of the BCH-wide “Emergency Division Book Club” with virtual meetings and guest authors

Alan Leichtner, MD, MSHPEd - created an aquarium at his home and has enjoyed bonding with his grandchild, introducing her to scientific investigation, and the general respite that the watery world offers

Elissa Weitzman, ScD – absorption with textiles and working with her hands has enriched her life, led to new friendships and adventures when traveling (which she does frequently) to visit yarn dyers and designers, and provided a means for slowing down this fast-paced life. She founded the BCH group “Making Science in Fiber Arts” which intermittently brings together members of the community who work with their hands, knit, crochet, and invent

Elizabeth Gaufer, MD, MPH – love of art has led to her to develop museum-based medical education initiatives, including co-founding the Harvard Macy Institute Art Museum-based Health Professions Education Fellowship

Personal interests can refresh your perspective during your professional career, help sustain you during difficult times, and offer a pathway to life beyond your working years. Here are some tips on maintaining them and how to develop their strengths:

- Use a planner, either online or hardcopy, to reserve blocks of time; consider these slots non-negotiable, unless you are responding to an emergency
- Beyond planners, you can also start journaling. Both amateur athletes, gardeners, and bakers often write their results in notebooks and trace developments over time. Did the muffins taste differently today? What caused this? What ingredients or brands were included in the baking? Similarly, athletes note their energy levels, sense of ease in movement, and overall strength in workout journals. Gardeners note seasonal needs and growth of plants (and their beauty).
- While some enjoy their activities as solo pursuits, networks can connect you to others who share your passion and can link you to events that might interest you. Do some Google searches, such as “Boston-Area Hikers” from time-to-time to see if a group can offer support.

- Reaching out to mentors is not just a professional strategy. Do you know an experienced person in your network who could provide assistance in your projects?
- Don't be afraid to actually explore specific training: Boston-area community centers (Cambridge, Arlington, Boston, etc) have many Adult Education courses for both the beginner and the advanced practitioner.
- And look into teaching one of these community Adult Education courses yourself!