

A Pandemic-sized Effect on Writing and Editing

At the beginning of my time as Editor of *JAACAP Connect* in 2019, I was excited for the opportunity to expand the tent of writers to *Connect* by involving those who may have never thought of an academic journal as a forum for their interests, such as those participating in advocacy. The ability to collaborate with the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's Advocacy Committee to bring in new writers to *Connect* was the exciting first step in this mission. As Editor of *Connect*, I learned that there are situations you will never be able to anticipate when trying to plan out your time as an editor. 2020 became a very clear example of the unpredictability of life and quickly showed our editorial board that we need to be equipped and ready to develop content pertinent to current situations. COVID-19 and the associated pandemic has become the primary thought on everyone's mind. Though we might not be caring for patients in ICUs with COVID-19 or worrying as much about the physical impact of COVID-19 on the children we see, it is still impacting every part of our professional and personal lives. We went from seeing kids in person to seeing them through a Zoom or FaceTime. We have listened to the impact of being removed from the classroom, all while worrying about ourselves and our families' safety every time we stepped foot into the office or the hospital. It became clear to us how much the pandemic affected our readers and writers through the article content that arrived in the *JAACAP Connect* inbox. We saw a significant uptick in papers with a focus on the impact of COVID-19. As an Editorial Board we recognized the responsibility to provide content that focused on the impact of COVID-19 in child psychiatry. Anne McBride, the incoming *Connect* editor, *connected* the changes we were seeing with COVID-19 to the larger systemic difficulties we face daily as child psychiatrists, and opportunities to use this pandemic for greater systemic change, spearheading this theme issue to raise these questions. While I would have never expected the final issue I would work on as editor would be focused on

a virus, it also further fulfills the mission that as writers and editors we need to be ready to expand the tent to include what is clinically relevant, which may include advocacy, a global pandemic, or the significant impact of systemic racism on the mental health of children.

Justin Schreiber, DO, MPH
Outgoing *JAACAP Connect* Editor

I love the name *JAACAP Connect*. *Connecting* with others has always been important to me, and this year, amidst isolation and division, forging and maintaining *Connections* is one of the most critical things we can do. Now is the time to come together. In this spirit, I was delighted when Justin and I made the decision to co-write the introduction for our special issue on the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Justin over the past 18 months as he has prepared me for the transition to *Connect* Editor. He has made me feel so welcomed and included, and has modeled so beautifully the role of a true team leader. Thank you, Justin. You, and the growing list of former *Connect* editors (Michelle Horner and Oliver Stroeh), are handing off an extremely well cared for and impressive publication. As we move forward with *Connect*, I can't help but think about how we move forward as a field, a nation, a world. Earlier on, perhaps a few months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when my own sadness, fear, and anxiety diminished to a more manageable level, I reflected on how the devastating effects of the pandemic would undoubtedly lead to profound change. I also now reflect on how tragically, as I write this introduction, the number of lives lost in this country due to COVID-19 has doubled when compared with the number of lives lost at the time that many of these articles were written. But even early on, I realized that our country has an opportunity to create systemic changes. I have to believe that something good will come out of tragedy—that we can build better ways of doing things. As child psychia-

trists with unique perspectives and broad knowledge, we can all have a voice in envisioning great change. When I shared the idea with my fellow *Connect* editorial board members, the response was overwhelming with enthusiasm and interest. The majority of these articles were thus written with collaboration between our board members and trainees, promoting the *Connectivity*, education, and mentorship that form the core mission of *Connect*.

The issue begins with a wonderful piece by Drs. Hoq and Henderson, who introduce a thoughtful and critical discussion about children's rights in general, and specifically within the context of a global pandemic. From there, I had the privilege of working with 2 outstanding medical students and future child psychiatrists, Steven Lam and Jacqueline Williams, along with my colleague, Michael Kelly, in a collaborative article examining child care in the United States, a system uprooted by the pandemic, further exposing systemic flaws and disparities. Similar to Hoq and Henderson's thesis, prioritizing children and child development in the child care system can lead to positive systemic change. Next, Drs. Jeffrey, Szeftel, and Herman suggest that supporting employee wellbeing in our Head Start (early childhood education) programs can have profound beneficial effects on the

provision of educational services to children. Moving on to elementary, middle, and high school, Dr. Schreiber *et al.* provide a relevant update on how virtual schooling has affected our students, particularly when it comes to mental health needs, and present opportunities for collaboration between teachers, schools, families, and child psychiatrists. We then continue on to medical education and graduate medical education (child and adolescent psychiatry) during a pandemic (respectively Ms. Thaler and Dr. Shankar; Ms. Ojha and Dr. Richards) before highlighting teaching opportunities from the perspective of an educator during the pandemic (Dr. Calhoun and Dr. Martin). Finally, I could not be prouder of the child psychiatry fellows from my own program who wrote an inspiring piece about their creative experience in their program's attempt to stave off isolation and burnout while providing patient care during a pandemic. As I read through this collection, I am left feeling hopeful as I consider all the creativity, knowledge, experience, talent, and grit that is clearly present and necessary when considering our part, as child psychiatrists, in building better systems of care. I hope you are left with similar hope and inspiration.

Anne McBride, MD
Incoming JAACAP *Connect* Editor