



Maryland Career Development Association

November 2020 Newsletter

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Happy National Career Development Month, MCDA Members

As many of you know, each November, career development professionals around the world are encouraged to celebrate National Career Development Month with career-related activities. How will you mark the occasion this year?

Here is a roundup of some virtual events that might be of interest (many of which feature our very own MCDA members in bold!):

1. **[MACCA's Virtual Conference on November 9th & 10th](#)** - The Mid-Atlantic Career Counseling Association (MACCA) is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and is marking the occasion with holding its annual conference virtually on the theme of "Celebrating the Past. Embracing Our Future". In addition to two interesting keynote speakers, past MCDA President, **Ronda Ansted**, and MCDA member, **Janet Glover-Kerkvliet** will both be presenting concurrent sessions. (\$25 for MACCA members and \$50 for non-members)
2. **[NCDA's Career Practitioner Institute on November 10th](#)** - NCDA will host its first ever virtual CPI on "Practical Techniques and Strategies for Career Development Practitioners". **Natalie Kauffman**, MCDA's Legislative Committee Chair, will be hosting one of the pre-recorded sessions. 6 CE's are available for this event. (\$175 for NCDA members and \$275 for non-members)
3. **[MCDA Webinar “My Boss Hates Me, Now What Do I Do?” on November 20th from 12-2pm](#)** - Dr. Tom Ayala, Past President of the National Employment Counseling Association and advocate for veteran civilian employment after service, will present on the not very often discussed topic of employees finding themselves in an outgroup situation. This webinar will address known characteristics of how this relational dynamic impacts the safety, citizenship, engagement, and psychological wellbeing of impacted employees. (2 CE's are available. \$40 for members, \$80 for non-members)

4. **Other State CDA events** - With everything virtual now, you can also take advantage of webinars and virtual conferences hosted by our fellow state career development organizations. You can find many of these listed on the [NCDA website](#).

- Michigan is hosting its conference on 11/12 on the theme of social justice
<https://www.michcda.org/conference/>
- Maine is hosting a workshop on Life Design on 11/13 with Dr. Farouk Dey of Johns Hopkins University <https://mcda37.wildapricot.org>
- North Carolina is hosting its conference on 11/18-11/19 on “New Beginnings”
<https://nccdaonline.org/Conference>

5. **NCDA Social Justice resources** - https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/social_justice Of particular note is a webinar recording on “Helping Clients Cope with Bias During the Job Search Process” by **Lakeisha Mathews**, current NCDA President-Elect and past MCDA President .

Share what you'll be doing this month to celebrate by posting on our LinkedIn Group <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/38105/> We'd love to hear what you're up to and don't forget to check out MCDA's Tribe site <https://mcda.tribe.so>

More MCDA events are being planned for December and in 2021 so stay tuned. If you have an idea or would like to present, please let us know.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving.

Julie Neill
MCDA President



Building Resilience By Karol Taylor

“Persistence and resilience only come from having been given the chance to work through difficult problems.” ~ Gever Tulley in his TED^X Talk

“The ability to take misfortune and make something good come of it is a rare gift. Those who possess it (...) are said to have resilience or courage.” ~ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of FLOW



If you were to define the word resilience, what would you say? To me, it means adapting to and accepting the new way of being that currently surrounds us. Even better, to find new methods of accomplishing the same pre-pandemic tasks in a different, more progressive manner. Some people say the pandemic has changed our way of life forever. The immediate shift will probably last for a good while, and in the end, our new ways of accomplishing workplace tasks might be so innovative and effective that we will not want to go back.

Where do we find the ability to adjust and make it through? Perhaps it is in our own personal resilience. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defined individual resilience

as the ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity and stress. In other words, resilience can manifest as returning to one's original state of wellbeing when we incorporate effective coping strategies.

When we experience distressing issues, we usually react with grief and a range of negative emotions. This is a natural reaction to having our expectations dashed or our goals thwarted. However, such experiences are not only inevitable, but are almost a requirement for personal growth and development.

This pandemic is the exact sort of experience that builds resilience. With resilience, you can work through the effects of stress and negative emotions and not only bounce back, but actually thrive. To grasp and develop resilience effectively, it is important to understand some factors contributing to it.

Some Components of Resilience

Optimism – those who are optimistic tend to be more resilient as well since they are more likely to stay positive about the future even when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Altruism – the most resilient among us often turn to help others when they need to relieve stress and boost their self-efficacy.

Moral Compass – people with a strong moral compass or a steadfast set of beliefs about right and wrong generally have an easier time bouncing back.

Faith and Spirituality – while not a required factor for resilience, people often find their faith helpful in surviving challenges and coming through stronger and wiser on the other side.

Humor – people who have a healthy sense of humor and are able to laugh at their own misfortune are at an advantage when it comes to bouncing back, for obvious reasons!

Having a Role Model – this is also not a requirement for resilience, but those who have a role model in mind can draw strength from their desire to emulate this person.

Social Supports – unsurprisingly, social support is important when it comes to resilience; those with strong social support networks are better equipped to bounce back from loss or disappointment.

Facing Fear – this is not so much a characteristic as an action or tendency to act, but people who are willing to leave their comfort zone and confront their fears are more likely to overcome their challenges and grow as a person.

Meaning or Purpose in Life – it shouldn't be surprising that those who feel they have a specific purpose in life or find a tremendous amount of meaning in their lives are more likely to recover from failure or disappointment; when you fervently believe you have a purpose, you are less likely to give up when faced with tragedy or loss.

Training – while a portion of individual resilience may be somewhat permanent and unchangeable, there is an opportunity for improvement; it is possible to improve your resilience through training and development.

In their book *The Resilience Factor*, Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatté identify the five typical emotions that are associated with a lack of resilience, namely:

- Anger
- Sadness or Depression
- Guilt
- Anxiety or Fear
- Embarrassment

It is completely natural to experience these emotions from time to time. The key to recognizing them as indicators of a lack of resilience is whether they are disproportionate to the event or if the same event triggers the same emotion repeatedly. For those who react in this manner, an increase in resilience would be hugely beneficial.

For us to flourish and thrive at work and at home we need to ensure that we recognize these emotions as they arise, assess whether they are appropriate, take responsibility for our lack of resilience, if that is the case, and apply the tools to reframe our experiences.

While some people seem to be born with the resilience gene, some of the necessary skills of resilience can also be learned when practiced over time. Luckily for us, resilience is a characteristic that can be built, developed, and enhanced in any workforce, and in life.

Paula Davis-Laack, a positive psychologist who has applied her knowledge and skills to the practice of enhancing resilience in thousands of working professionals, lays out the seven ways that resilient employees do things differently, benefitting both themselves and their organization. According to Davis-Laack, highly resilient employees:

- Develop high-quality connections
- Manage stress effectively and avoid burnout
- Act authentically and in accordance with their strengths and values
- Develop grit (the passion and perseverance to pursue long-term goals)
- Stay inspired and find meaning
- Stay flexible and mentally tough
- Actively manage change and setbacks

As the renowned Executive Coach, Martha Beck exhorts us, “We’ve lost so much to this pandemic. Admitting that, letting go of what we hoped would happen, letting others see us humbled and flattened, and then having the patience to accept whatever happens next, will not only defeat the virus, it will make us better people, who are calmer and more compassionate. In short, it will make us more resilient.”



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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The Peace Building Career Connection By David J. Smith

We live in a time where global challenges call upon young professionals to contribute to creating change at the micro, meso, and macro social and political levels. For instance, because of the COVID-19 crisis, public health and frontline medical workers are needed to work with affected populations. A renewed commitment to social justice attracts those interested in the work for political and criminal justice reform. College graduates who have benefited from international experiences can contribute greatly to these efforts.

I've worked closely with Fulbright grantees, Peace Corps volunteers, and English teaching assistants, who upon returning to the United States, want to put their skills and experience to use in their home communities.

Increasingly, graduates who are pursuing careers in social and political change are engaged in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding work furthers respect for human rights, advances economic and social prospects, increases access to public health resources, and most importantly, counters physical violence and the social, legal, and political structures that harm marginalized groups by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

Examples of peacebuilding fields include humanitarian assistance, development, education, human rights, social justice, and conflict resolution. These areas have both international and domestic applications. Those pursuing a career in education can consider working in economically disadvantaged communities in the United States, or in refugee camps around the world. Graduates interested in humanitarian work can gain experience in natural disaster prevention and recovery efforts in the United States, as well as in parts of the world dealing with massive drought and human displacement. Those pursuing law can work for domestic civil rights causes or on global human rights issues.

International educators who offering opportunities for students to explore peacebuilding careers allows students to not only act on their interests and passion, but to apply the skills they've obtained through international experiences. Here are four steps that international educators might consider to provide students and recent grads with some guidance.

1. Make the connection between students' global experiences and local community needs.

This is an important first step. A student might have found meaning in an overseas experience as a volunteer working with those affected by violence or in need of educational support. Increasingly, short-term study abroad experiences are service-focused with the goal of providing assistance to a population in need. Returning home, a student might want to continue that engagement, not recognizing that their own community has similar needs. Remember: A student can be a global citizen by working in their own backyard.

2. Help students frame their international experiences in tangible ways.

When articulating the value of study abroad, there is sometimes a reliance on generalized aptitudes or skills that might be applicable beyond an international experience. To say that a student is “culturally competent” or has “good communication skills” can be too vague to be helpful when students apply for jobs.

What exactly did the student do that shows cultural competence? Did they use foreign language skills on a daily basis? Did they make a decision to engage in a specific course of action based on a correct assessment of a cultural norm? For instance, a health care volunteer might have recognized that a certain approach, though common in the United States, would not be accepted in an international context. Students can often use a well-crafted story to show how they applied a generalized skill.

Specific skills related to peacebuilding work include not only those that are communication-based such as active and empathetic listening, but those that relate to assessment such as monitoring and evaluation (known in the field as “M&E”) and grant writing as it relates to specific programs and initiatives.

3. Provide students with experiential opportunities to engage in peacebuilding work.

Nothing beats experience. An immersive work experience allows students to test their skills and ability to walk “in the shoes” of a professional for a short time. Students might aspire to a specific kind of work, only to recognize that it isn’t for them once they’re in the day-to-day grind. Internships and other experience-based activities can offer this.

In my nongovernmental organization, students learn about the work of humanitarian operators by spending several days role-playing and learning about what working with refugees and internally displaced persons is really like. In this way, students gain a better understanding of whether they want to pursue this line of work. This is a reality test that only experiential learning can provide.

4. Connect students with peers who can offer relevant insight.

We all know the importance of role models and mentors in career development. While students are frequently connected with highly successful professionals, I would suggest that sometimes, senior professionals are not as helpful as more junior professionals, who are closer in age to those seeking a career.

Though I’ve had a varied (maybe even interesting to some) career, at 60, many of my experiences were from very different times and circumstances than those that today’s twentysomethings face. For them, someone just a few years older, who is a few steps ahead of them, might be more relevant and in tune with their needs. Recent alumni can be valuable resources here.

A peacebuilding career focus offers those with a global outlook the chance to engage in work that applies their interests, specific skill sets, and desire to contribute to the common good. Helping

students translate their experiences to career paths will ensure that they not only find meaningful career paths but capitalize on the full value of their international experiences.



David J. Smith, JD, MS, is a [career coach based in Washington, D.C.](#) He is the president of the [Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education](#) and the author of *Peace Jobs: A Student's Guide to Starting a Career Working for Peace* (Information Age Publishing 2016). He is adjunct faculty at the Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. He was a Fulbright U.S. Scholar teaching at the University of Tartu in Estonia and is the president of the board of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Fulbright Association. David can be reached at davidjsmith@davidjsmithconsulting.com.

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Military Spouse Employment Issues – A Veteran Spouse Perspective – Part One

By Karen Francis

Living and working in the National Capitol region, chances are, you know at least one ‘veteran spouse’, who has some fascinating stories from years spent living all over the world. As a career coach/advisor you may have been asked to assist one. The story in that resume is not so cheerful.

A military spouse resume resembles a doily – a job here, a volunteer stint there, and perhaps, another degree or certification. None of it is cohesive or proceeds in that straight career path that a recruiter can understand. It is often difficult to understand the resume, to see any progression or try to figure out where to go with it.

For those who are already familiar with the military spouse employment life, you can skip this paragraph. For those who are not, I will explain the doily analogy. Military Spouse Linda (MSL) lives with Sgt S and their two children at Fort Huachuca in Chula Vista, Arizona. Orders come down for a reassignment–to Stuttgart, Germany. MSL packs up the house and gives notice to her employer that doesn’t allow remote work. She then researches the best locations for schools and medical services where they will be living, possibilities for the children to continue in dance or soccer in a different country, and how to transport pets to Europe. On movement day, they fly to Stuttgart. S goes straight to the new unit. MSL finds housing, waits for the multiple shipments of household goods, enrolls the children in their new school and activities, and figures out the best places to live, shop and play. She then begins looking for work in her field, which is nonexistent. For three years she volunteers as the vice president of this group, treasurer of that, works retail at the PX to afford the dream trip or the mortgage on the house ‘back home.’ Orders come down to relocate to Fort Belvoir, Virginia and the process starts all over again.

After over 20 years of service, S retires and goes straight into a new job in his field. MSL reflects on her education and experience which includes degrees and certifications, volunteer work, temporary jobs, and a work from home business. She then tries to decide what she wants to do. Does she go back to the career she envisaged when she earned her degree in Communications and Public Relations, the certification in Six Sigma Yellow Belt, or the coding class?

Recruiters and Human Resource directors have a reputation of refusing to hire a military spouse, as they continue to look for someone who will remain at the company for years. Notwithstanding the new reality that the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that workers change jobs every 4.2 years, this continues to hamper the employability of military spouses.

As with all subgroups, there are myths about military spouses, that have been reinforced by TV and film. But – let's do a little myth-busting.

- Myth: Military spouses are un-educated. Fact: 84% have some college, 25% have a Bachelor degree, and 10% have advanced degrees.
- Myth: Military spouses have no work experience. Fact: *Most of them have had multiple jobs in various fields since they must take whatever job they can!*
- Myth: Military spouses will leave a job at a faster rate than non-military spouses. Fact: If they are able to stay in the area, they will stay with a company and will continue to work remotely. Loyalty is important to them.
- Myth: Military spouses can't work remotely, or use the internet [most ridiculous]* Fact: This is a group that has been working remotely and on the internet much longer than Covid-19-related 'working remotely' employee mandates. They have been using social media to form communities for a long time!
- Myth: Military spouses are a federally protected class. Fact: While, there is a military spouse hiring preference within the federal government, there is not one in the private sector.

Reasons a recruiter should hire a military spouse:

- They are resilient, can juggle multiple challenges, and have done so for decades.
- They are adaptable and used to navigating changes without hesitation.
- They are resourceful, great researchers and multi-taskers that create and implement innovative solutions.
- Due to the diverse makeup of the military community, they are socially aware and able to make connections quickly.
- Challenged to find paid work, they are very civically engaged – 65% have either formally or informally volunteered in the past year.
- Loyal, if they are given a chance, they will stay with a company as long as possible.

In next month's newsletter, Part Two of this article will address "How do we fix this"?

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Karen Santiano Francis - MS, GCDF, CCSP, is the Program Coordinator for Onward2Opportunity - Institute for Veterans and Military Families out of Syracuse University. She has been a member of NCDA since 2014 and is a new member of MCDA, having joined earlier this year.

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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. The article deadline for the December issue is November 15th. For article submissions or questions, please email: Rachel Loock, Editor,
MCDA.Newsletter@MDCareers.org

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