

for their guidance and support in this process. Being a distinguished fellow brings a much higher responsibility in serving my patients and their communities. My advice for the new generation is; *“Be open to learning and be a student of life. That is the elixir of youth.”*



APA 2020 DISTINGUISHED FELLOWS

John Sharp, MD, DFAPA



I am greatly honored to be promoted to Distinguished Fellow of the APA. I'd like to thank Dr. Cynthia Kettle and the MPS for encouraging me. My commitment to patients and to educating fellow physicians and the general public about mental health has always been at the core of my physicianly ways. I am fortunate that I have been able to help so many people along the way and am grateful for the recognition of my peers.

My grandfather, Dr. Ezra Sharp was my first inspiration in medicine. He was a beloved internist in Providence, Rhode Island. As a boy I remember getting in his car after dinner to join him in making house calls. Usually a relative would keep me company in the kitchen, maybe giving me a piece of pie, while Dr. Sharp attended to the ill. Even though I had no idea what was happening, I could sense relief that developed by the time “we” were done. Something important had happened and it felt good. I realized that I wanted to pursue medicine as well.

I went to Harvard College and Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. I liked part of pretty much every clinical rotation, which was confusing, until I realized that the driver for me was the doctor-patient relationship, the same thing I saw and experienced as a boy. Psychiatry suddenly seemed the obvious choice. I was resident and Chief resident at UCSF Langley Porter Institute and stayed on as faculty in C/L psychiatry for several more years, before returning to Boston to raise my two daughters on the east coast. I was fortunate to find a position at the Beth Israel hospital and have remained on faculty at the BIDMC and HMS ever since. For quite a while now, I've been in full time private practice, mostly in Boston, but also with a boutique practice in Los Angeles, where I'm also on faculty at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine. I've had a very interesting time endeavoring to reach out to the general public regarding health and well-being, have written two books, and managed to become an expert in media for a good while, with numerous radio and TV appearances. A problem with all that, I found, is that most everybody looking to the media wants to be entertained, and rarely wants to deeply ponder what may be the full understanding and answer to a complicated question.

So, I found that the best way to make a real difference in people's lives is in my individual consulting room -- providing experienced, integrated, psychotherapeutic and psychopharmacological care to patients on an intensive and individualized basis. On a good day, I almost can't believe we are remunerated to do this work, as it's so inherently rewarding, and on a bad day, some remaining hairs fall out. But with the support of my professional friends and colleagues, I am always inspired. Over the years, I served proudly as a board examiner for the ABPN, a member of two national traveling teams. Most all of my friends and colleagues to whom I am referring are either members of those ABPN teams or colleagues from the Department of Psychiatry at the BIDMC and HMS. I am very grateful for all the fellowship and inspiration. Even more importantly, I am quite sure I could not be close to my best without the loving support I enjoy day-to-day from my wife, Elline, from my two wonderful daughters, Ashley and Else Sharp, and from my little Bedlington terrier, Jesse.