

Clinician Highlight

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Tell us a little about your clinical practice and your role in your practice/division/department.

As a psychiatrist at the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) and MGH, I focus my clinical care on the mental health of patients who live on the street. I care for patients in various settings including street outreach, home visits for patients recently or unstably housed, and a clinic at MGH for patients experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Outside of my clinical work, I conduct research related to homelessness and mental illness, in which I collaborate with colleagues at HMS, the VA, and other institutions. I also find joy in teaching medical students and residents about psychiatry, serving as a core faculty member in the HMS Psychiatry Course for second-year medical students and precepting residents in our MGH clinic for patients experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

When did you come to MGH and why?

I came to MGH for psychiatry residency in 2014 because I was inspired by its people and culture of excellence. As a fourth-year medical student rotating at the hospital, I was captivated by the humane, caring, and rigorous environment in which clinical care and teaching took place. The MGH community has a rare ability to combine clinical excellence with supportive colleagues, a tremendous combination. Upon graduating from residency, I felt fortunate to continue my clinical work and grow my research career in this environment among extraordinary colleagues.

Is there a project or program you want to tell us a little about?

My research and writing have focused on creating frameworks and elucidating best practices for providing high-quality care to the homeless population, particularly focused on mental health care. My recent articles have focused on policy approaches to reduce homelessness and mental illness and how to clinically assess a homeless person in need on the street. Toward the goal of preventing homelessness, I worked with colleagues at HMS on a prediction model to identify military service members at high risk of becoming homeless upon leaving the army, which has motivated a case management intervention to help prevent these high-risk individuals from becoming homeless. Finally, I am working with the BHCHP street team to expand access and optimize care for patients experiencing homelessness through clinical innovations at MGH. Collectively, these projects aim to reduce suffering and improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness and mental illness.

What is one thing you love about your work?

The fulfilling, meaningful, and nourishing relationships and humans connections that I am able to make with patients and colleagues. Psychiatry is a field that allows people to share their innermost struggles, hopes, and dreams. I feel these relationships can be especially profound when working with individuals experiencing homelessness, given the intensity of what they experience. These deep relationships can also extend to colleagues as well, which I value greatly. The work is often challenging, but I come home every day knowing there is nothing else I would rather be doing.

Tell us a little bit about your life outside of medicine.

I am incredibly fortunate to have two delightful children, ages 2 and 4, a wonderful husband (also an MGH physician), and a baby on the way. We love to spend weekends on our deck in the summertime, playing basketball in the driveway or sports in the backyard, and seeing our family and friends. It is because of their nourishment and love that I am able to experience the energy, vitality, and joy that I do in my work life.