

# Becoming and Being a Psychiatrist

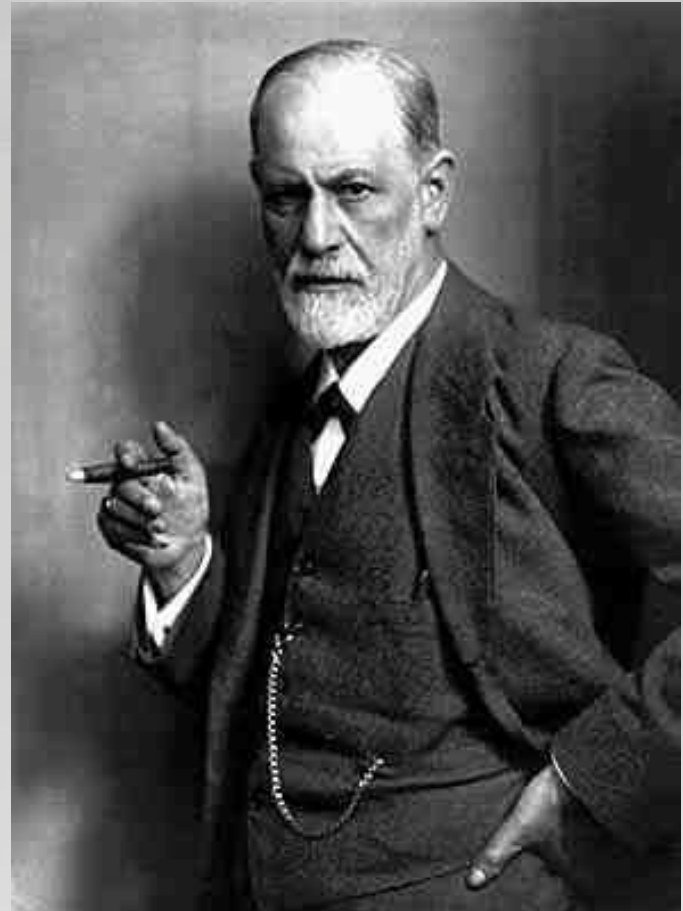
Steve Ellen



# *Why start with this?*

- ◆ In terms of transitions, this is a big one
  - ◆ School kid to uni student
  - ◆ Uni student to doctor
  - ◆ RMO to registrar
  - ◆ Registrar to consultant
  - ◆ Consultant to retiree
  - ◆ Retiree to dead person
- ◆ Registrars have multiple roles, many of which are conflicting.

*Why have YOU chosen  
psychiatry?*





# *Being a Registrar - your roles*

- ◆ Student of psychiatry
- ◆ Doctor for your patients
- ◆ Team member for your unit
- ◆ Teacher of other doctors
- ◆ Employee of your hospital
- ◆ Member of your community & family

# *Balancing your responsibilities*

- ◆ Multiples masters
  - ◆ RANZCP
  - ◆ University
  - ◆ Hospital
  - ◆ Supervisor
  - ◆ Consultants
  - ◆ Patients
- ◆ Fit into many hierarchies







*Its hard at times!*

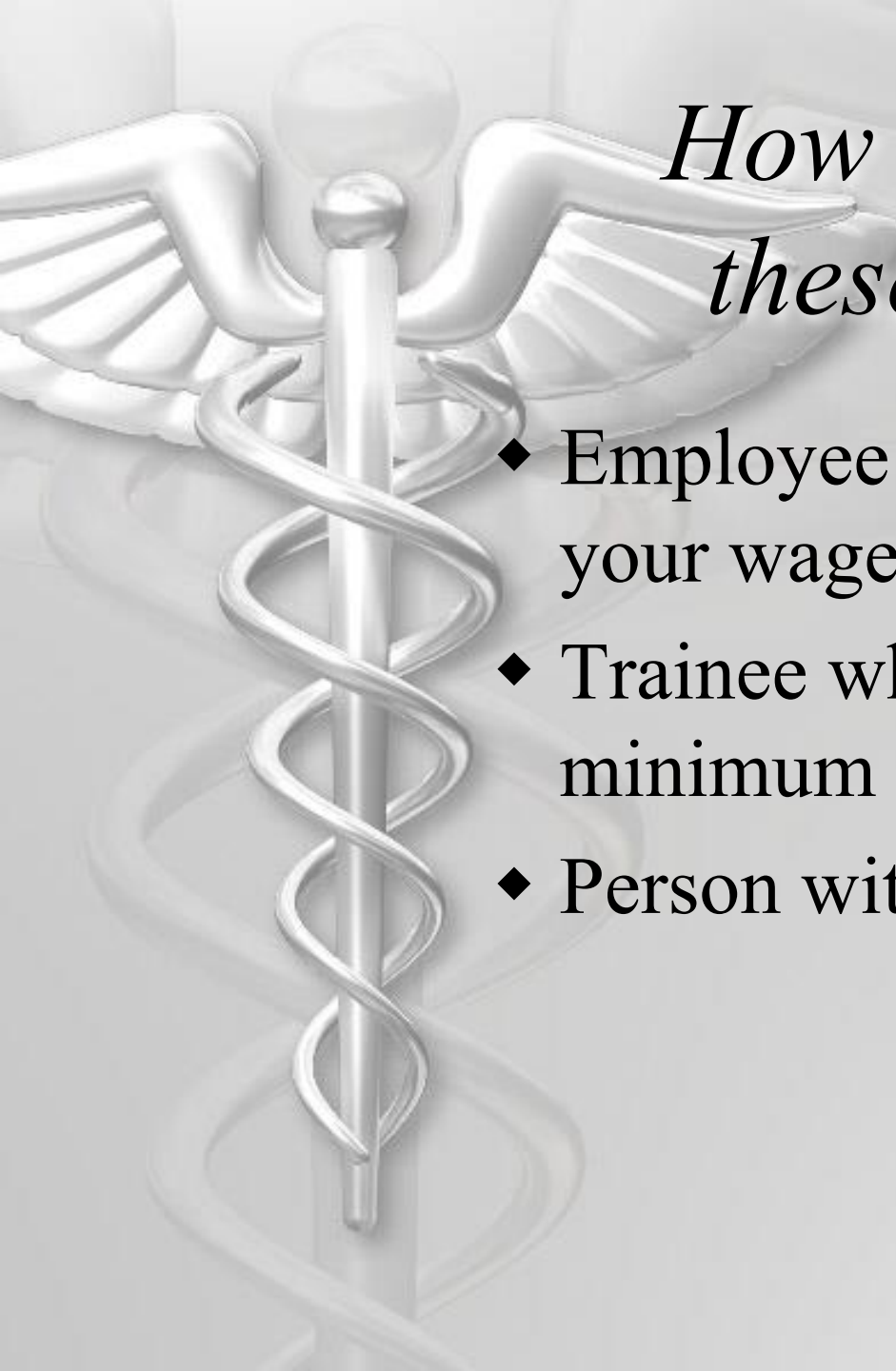
- ◆ Exams: infantilise you, tire you, stress you. Can't plan for your future. Make your job hard. Make your other roles seem trivial. Get tunnel vision. Deal with failure (sometimes for the first time).
- ◆ Be aware and be prepared!





# *Many responsibilities conflict...*

- ◆ How do you balance a busy job with exam preparation?
- ◆ What if your consultant demands that you assess all the new patients but you have MPM starting in one hour?



## *How will you prioritize these responsibilities?*

- ◆ Employee of a hospital that pays your wage and expects you to work
- ◆ Trainee who wants to qualify in the minimum time
- ◆ Person with a life





## *Tips*

- ◆ Be flexible: change priorities according to the circumstances
- ◆ Don't neglect any or you will pay the price later
- ◆ If you need to neglect one for a brief period, repair the damage ASAP
- ◆ Be receptive to feedback



## *Common Traps*

- ◆ Pass first time but annoy everyone you work with
- ◆ Pass first time but forget all of your friends' names
- ◆ Be the best registrar but never get around to sitting the exams
- ◆ Demand all your rights but forget your responsibilities
- ◆ Whiz through but be unemployable



# *What do psychiatrists do?*

- ◆ Clinicians

- ◆ Hospital Vs Private
- ◆ Bio, Psycho or Social or any combinations

- ◆ Academics

- ◆ Teacher or researcher
- ◆ Uni, college or media

- ◆ Administrators & Leadership roles

- ◆ Hospital, Uni and college roles

# *Is it much better than being a registrar?*

- ◆ Own boss
- ◆ More choice
- ◆ Extraordinary range of professional options
- ◆ Leadership in the community
- ◆ Untold wealth!

(sadly, just kidding!)





*But....*

- ◆ Its not a learning environment, so you have to try much harder to keep ahead of the game
  - ◆ *So use your registrar time wisely*
- ◆ Its hard to get feedback, so easy to become complacent

# *Some of the challenges in psychiatry*

- ◆ Evidence is lacking
  - ◆ Also lacks in the rest of medicine, but more so in psychiatry
  - ◆ To be honest, we are not *that* different to alternative medicine in our evidence base
  - ◆ This isn't necessarily a bad thing – don't be an apologist, be a realist!
  - ◆ We are clinicians, our unique skills are history taking, mental state examination and talking to people.





# *Some of the challenges in psychiatry*

- ◆ The “high priest” syndrome

- ◆ We get afforded an awe we don’t necessarily deserve
- ◆ Its *VERY* easy to get sucked in to it (remember our system of working is self-fulfilling)
- ◆ Pedestals make precarious perches



# *Conclusions*

- ◆ Think about your roles and balance them
- ◆ Talk about the challenges with each other and your supervisors
- ◆ Listen to everyone, be respectful of their ideas, but don't be afraid to draw your own conclusions
- ◆ You are joining a great profession, enjoy it!

