

Samm Anderegg, PharmD, MS, BCPS



Follow Your Passion, Focus on Relationships, Develop Expertise, and Enjoy the Ride

The influence and support of dedicated mentors opened Samm's eyes to opportunities he might not have known about otherwise, allowing him to develop unique and marketable skills. The more Samm encountered these willing mentors, the more comfortable he became seeking and accepting support. In his letter, he advises readers to do the same. Samm also sought to identify his strengths—and weaknesses—because he felt that self-awareness was the foundation of growth. His quest for self-awareness served him well and helped to make him a stronger team contributor.

Samm Anderegg is Project Manager and Consultant to the Pharmacy HIT (PHIT) Collaborative and is engaged in other contracts in the healthcare technology industry. Samm received his PharmD at the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy and a MS in Pharmacy Practice at the University of Kansas; he completed a postgraduate year (PGY) 1 and PGY2 residency at the University of Kansas Hospitals and College of Pharmacy. His work with the PHIT Collaborative focuses on providing an electronic framework for pharmacists to document patient care services in electronic systems.

Samm's advice is: ***Experience, take risks, reflect, learn, and grow constantly. Eventually, you'll be the one doing the mentoring.***

 ***Dear Young Pharmacist,***

Your career in pharmacy will likely be long and rewarding. There are several lessons you will learn along the way. I'd like to share a few important experiences and how they have impacted my career. Mentorship, vulnerability, self-awareness, and hard work are consistent themes. Your goal is not to be perfect but to experience, learn, and grow throughout your career. *We rarely master things and are constantly*

“working on it.” Follow your passion, focus on relationships, develop expertise, and enjoy the ride.

During pharmacy school, one of our lectures covered the history of pharmacy and how we’ve evolved from chemists to clinicians. This set me on fire; I wanted to contribute to this transformation during my career. Completing a residency was the best way to lay a foundation of success, but I needed help in making myself a good candidate. I reached out to one of my professors; to my surprise, he asked to set up a meeting! He told me grades are not everything and encouraged me to get involved, seek mentors, and learn as much as I could from each experience. His guidance was insightful, practical, and motivating. Knowing that someone believed in me was powerful fuel. I became more comfortable asking for help.

Another professor invited me to work on his federally funded research study and helped me publish the paper in a peer-reviewed journal. My Dean and the Director of Pharmacy at Iowa gave me valuable information about administrative residencies and wrote letters of recommendation. These relationships remain strong today, and we continue to stay in touch. Their guidance provided essential experience and made me a competitive candidate for residency programs.

Identify potential mentors, introduce yourself and develop a relationship, ask for help when you need it, and stay in touch. Find people you respect and wish to emulate as well as ones who spur your passion. Asking someone for guidance is the beginning of a mentor relationship that, if cultivated and nurtured, can last a lifetime. Mentors will listen, advise, open up doors, and always have your back. The benefit you gain is reciprocated to the mentor, creating a synergistic relationship. Thank your mentors every chance you get. Let them know how much they mean to you. Simply keeping mentors updated on your progress and sending an occasional note goes a long way. You are a product of their guidance; work hard and make them proud.

Be vulnerable with those you trust, share your struggles, accept failure and learn from it, and continue to grow. I thought I knew what “busy” was until I became a resident. Two years of 80-hour work weeks, classes in the evenings, school projects, research projects, side projects, committees, and ... oh, that other thing ... a life? At Kansas, I learned what hard work was all about and loved every moment of it. Well, maybe not the moments when I was panicking at 3AM working on a project due later that morning. The first 6 months were rough. Being forced into a group of new peers is uncomfortable. Going from zero to light speed on a steep learning curve is unsettling at best.

Nearing my breaking point, I learned the value of vulnerability. I shared an office with my two administrative co-residents. I had trouble bonding with them because it felt a little like a competition—and that’s normal. We were trained to think this