

Tracy J. Costello, PhD

Career Coach & Professional Development Training Consultant
Coach4Postdocs
Tampa, Florida



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A little bit of opportunity & serendipity

Identifying one's skills and values and aligning them with emerging opportunities is the core of the work that Tracy Costello, PhD, does through her career coaching and professional development consulting business. Tracy's goal is to help graduate and postdoc trained individuals get into a job they will enjoy and love.

Despite the depth and breadth of education achieved by those who have earned graduate degrees and/or trained as a postdoc, often there are anxieties or other hinderances that cause people to become stuck in one place. Rarely do their studies include training about how to get from where they are to where they want to be. Often some fresh insight is all that is needed to help an individual move to the next step in their career.

Tracy sees herself as a *connector*. She helps people find their niche by filling the gap where they feel stuck. Staying positive and being intentional at every step of your career process so that you are ready when opportunities arise is some of Tracy's most sage advice. *She can teach it because she has lived that very mantra.*

Following graduation from the MD Anderson UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences with a degree in statistics and genetics, Tracy became an MD Anderson postdoctoral fellow. During her fellowship she leveraged her knowledge of statistics and genetics to expand her study focus to include epidemiology, health disparities, and clinical trials. As a fellow, her involvement in the MD Anderson Postdoctoral Association played a pivotal role in helping her understand where she was in her career as well as where she wanted to go. She explored many areas that she didn't ultimately pursue. Throughout her journey, a theme of professional development emerged and was strengthened as she began working for MD Anderson creating career and professional development content for postdocs. The direct interaction of coaching and providing postdoc professional development quickly emerged as her calling and has driven her career ever since. Helping postdocs overcome obstacles to achieving their career trajectory is Tracy's career *why*.

Tracy's career has been predicated upon recognizing opportunity when it came along and giving it a full assessment as to right fit and time. In

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	<p>return, Tracy’s career has merited her much success, yet it has not been void of failure, which she says she’s learned the most from. Starting her own business has been exhilarating and scary at the same time. Keeping her eye on the prize is key to remaining focused on making the best career decisions that have landed her in the postdoc professional development space. She hopes her “never say die” attitude is adopted by her clients as they forge their way through their career journey.</p> <p>Her tried and true path to success has been tested many times. <i>Understand who you are; build your brand and network; be intentional and remain positive; learn from your successes and failures; and never let defeat come between you and your career goals.</i></p>
<i>MD Anderson School(s) from which I graduated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences – 2004 • MD Anderson Postdoctoral Fellow – 2004 – 2008
<i>Academic area of specialization</i>	Biomathematics, Biostatistics, Human & Molecular Genetics
<i>Current Employer</i>	Self-Employed – Coach4Postdocs <i>Career coaching & professional development for MS/PhD students & postdocs</i>
<i>Current City</i>	Tampa, Florida
<i>Current Position</i>	Principal – Coach4Postdocs <i>Career Coaching & Professional Development</i>
<i>LinkedIn Profile</i>	https://www.linkedin.com/in/tracycostello/
<i>Website</i>	https://www.coach4postdocs.com/
<i>Who are your mentors?</i>	<p>I’ve been fortunate to have several mentors that provided me support and guidance through my academic and professional journeys.</p> <p>During my PhD years of study, Chris Amos, PhD, encouraged me to broaden my thinking into the interdisciplinary realm, which grew my skill set immensely and gave me the opportunity to collaborate in many areas outside of my specific focus.</p> <p>As an MD Anderson postdoctoral fellow, Carol Etzel, PhD, inspired and challenged me to be both strategic and creative with my varied projects, which had significant impact on my interdisciplinary training. Carol was young enough to remember what it was like to be a postdoc but had</p>

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	<p>foresight to push me in research and create opportunities for professional development.</p> <p>Sara Strom, PhD, inspired me to stretch beyond my graduate training towards independence in thought and action. She helped curate my focus in epidemiology.</p> <p>Chris Amos, PhD, began his faculty appointment at MD Anderson in the Department of Epidemiology, rising to the rank of professor in 1999. He departed MD Anderson in 2012 and is currently the Associate Director of Quantitative Science at Baylor College of Medicine.</p> <p>Carol Etzel, PhD, came to MD Anderson in 1999 as a postdoc fellow and left MD Anderson in 2012 as an associate professor in MD Anderson’s Department of Epidemiology. Dr. Etzel also served as an adjunct professor at MD Anderson from February 2013 – August 2014.</p> <p>Sara Strom, PhD, joined MD Anderson in 1991 as a research associate in the Department of Epidemiology and became a faculty member in 1993. After more than 25 years in Epidemiology, Dr. Strom left MD Anderson as an associate professor in 2016.</p>
<i>Works of interest</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Editorial – NextGen Postdocs • Growing Progress in Supporting Postdocs • Supporting the needs of Postdocs: 2017 National Postdoctoral Association Institutional Policy Report
<i>Significant Career Accomplishments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biomarkers for Systemic Lupus Erythematosus
<i>Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married with 3 children
<i>Graduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS - 1998 • PhD – 2004
<i>Undergraduate school(s) from which I received a degree(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Southern Mississippi Bachelor of Science – Mathematics & Physics – 1994
<i>High school from which I received a degree.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niceville Senior High School Niceville, Florida – 1990

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