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Demian Szyld, MD

Simulation. From Day One.

Unlike many of the founders of the field of healthcare simulation who came into simulation education by trial and error and innovation and are generally self-taught, Demian Szyld, MD, EdM, at-large member of the SSH Board of Directors, is among the first of the new generation; he knew he wanted a career in simulation even before he went to college or medical school and has gotten formal training in both simulation and education.

“When I was in high school in Philadelphia, we had a chance to take the Red Cross lifeguarding course, that’s how I got started in simulation. Initially as a learner of first aid and CPR and later as a CPR instructor and as a disaster volunteer,” Szyld said. “Even though I did not know it was called experiential learning, this interest remained on the back burner as I got my medical and emergency medicine training.”

During his residency in Emergency Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, he helped initiate the simulation curriculum for medical students and for residents – as a resident himself. Later he was the first Fellow at STRATUS, the Center for Medical Simulation at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and completed a Master’s in Education at the Harvard Graduate School for Education.

Today, Szyld is the Senior Director of the Institute of Medical Simulation at the Center for Medical Simulation (CMS) in Boston. The Institute is the faculty development and educator training arm of CMS. Szyld’s role today is focused on educating the educators. He does so by innovating and collaborating with the CMS faculty including his mentors and colleagues Dan Raemer, Jenny Rudolph, Robert Simon, Walter Eppich, Mary Fey, Kate Morse and Janice Palaganas.

“I think that through our programs we can help the next generation of simulation faculty become effective in education. In short, designing fit-for-purpose engaging simulated activities and then giving and getting great feedback to reflect and learn from it,” he said.

As an SSH member since 2009, Szyld has watched SSH and IMSH mature from “one big inclusive tent” to an organized festival, in which there are many communities of practice functioning independently and also collaboratively within the larger field of simulation.

“As regional and specialty specific organizations arise or grow, SSH is still the one place where everybody can come together,” he said. “Volunteering for the society has been a
pleasure and also a source of enrichment. Everybody that I’ve worked with at the board or committee level has been really generous with me in sharing ideas and opportunities for growth. In giving to SSH, I’ve also gotten quite a bit back in return, namely in learning, great connections and a great time.”