

Episode: *Author Interview: “Critical Pedagogical Approaches to Structural Drivers of Health”*

Guest: Jake Young, PhD, MFA, MPH

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

[00:00:04] TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the Author Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I'm your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Dr Jake Young, a senior policy analyst at the American Medical Association in Chicago, Illinois. He's here to discuss his article, “*Critical Pedagogical Approaches to Structural Drivers of Health*,” in the September 2025 issue of the Journal, [Screening Children for Structural Drivers of Health](#). Dr Young, thank you so much for being back on the podcast. [music fades]

DR JAKE YOUNG: Thanks so much for having me.

[00:00:45] HOFF: So, what's the main ethics point of your article?

YOUNG: The key ethics point is that we, as a society, have an obligation to protect and care for children, and this means that health professionals have an obligation to screen children for the root causes of health inequities as part of routine care. And I would argue that one of the best ways to get physicians to not only screen for these structural drivers of health but also adopt an attitude of social and professional responsibility to advocate for changes to eliminate these drivers in the first place, is to bring critical pedagogy into health education.

[00:01:19] HOFF: And so, what should health professions students and trainees specifically be taking from this article?

YOUNG: The most important thing to take away is that critical pedagogy is really about social accountability. A central goal of health education shouldn't just be to teach students how to recognize structural drivers of health, though that is important, but also, how to think critically about these issues that impact patients, how to take action on their behalf, and how to fight for change. Not only is this important to providing quality care to patients, but it's also important to create a sense of purpose for students and trainees, to foster a sense of hope and a belief that systems that often seem broken can be improved.

[00:01:59] HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to your article that you didn't have the time or the space to fully explore, what would that be?

YOUNG: That we need to give physicians and health professionals space and time to do this work. Part of the advocacy work that needs to be done is not just about getting critical pedagogues and education, but also about getting hospitals and insurance companies to move away from trends that push physicians to spend less and less time with patients, and allow physicians and other health professionals to take the necessary time to develop relationships, meaningful relationships, with patients to foster deeper understandings and allow for them to provide better care. [theme music returns]

[00:02:37] HOFF: Dr Young, thank you so much for being back on the podcast, and as always, thanks for your contributions to the Journal.

YOUNG: Thank you.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of this month's issue for free, visit our site, journalofethics.org. We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.