

By [IU PIIC Mentor Andy Gavalis](#)

Why do people go into haunted houses? They know they will see scary things...ghosts, ghouls...*clowns!* They do it anyway. This strange behavior seems to happen more often around Halloween. However strange the behavior is, I believe facing fear is good practice. Perhaps, October is a good time for us to face our mentoring fears and do something we avoided for fear of failure. I think there are many parallels to be made between going into a haunted house and facing our mentoring fears to do something new and innovative with our practice. Here is what I think they are:

Parallel One - We know what we will encounter

When people go into haunted houses, they know what is coming, but they go in anyway. People who are afraid of clowns often go into the haunted house knowing that clowns—scary ones—will be waiting. In PIIC, if we are avoiding something, it is often because we know there is something that could go wrong. Perhaps, listing these fears is a good first step.

Parallel Two - Preparing with a backup plan

When people go into haunted houses, they often have a backup plan in case fear overcomes them. When the clown comes for them, they will close their eyes or hide under a jacket. In our PIIC mentoring practice, we know what will likely go wrong, so we can prepare a backup plan. The second step for facing our mentoring fears may be to prepare backup plans for the fears in step one.

Parallel Three - No one goes it alone

No one goes into a haunted house alone. In PIIC, we are always supported. This is probably the most important aspect of facing our fears. Before we start our new and innovative practice, we should tell everyone we know. We can garner support for ourselves by talking to our mentor

groups. Therefore, the third step for confronting our mentoring fears is to make it a social event. That also has a secondary benefit of engaging others in professional learning.

In conclusion, there are different reasons why people chose to go into haunted houses. One reason is for the thrill of it. Another reason is for the sake of overcoming fear. Both reasons are noble and should be adopted by mentors this October. If you are still not convinced that this is the time to face your fears, I offer one suggestion: make a list of the costs of not confronting your mentoring fear. The costs of inaction may be greater than the possibility of a minor failure. So, get in there and face those ghosts, goblins, and clowns of mentoring!