

Q&A With Kristen Iannuzzi, Acute Care Occupational Therapy Fellow

Kristen Iannuzzi, MS, OTR/L,
CPAM

- **Undergraduate school:** Grand Valley State University, Bachelor of Science in psychology
- **Graduate school:** Grand Valley State University, Master of Science in occupational therapy
- **Hometown:** Bloomingdale, New Jersey
- **Fellowship completion year:** [Acute care therapy fellowship](#), 2019



Why did you pursue an occupational therapy fellowship in acute care?

For the first two years of my career, I felt that I was becoming very specialized. Acute care offers exposure to a large variety of diagnoses and a fast-paced, stimulating environment. It is also the perfect setting to learn time management and communication skills that apply to any field.



Kristen Iannuzzi and fellowship director, Kelly Casey, at Kristen's fellowship graduation.

Why did you choose the fellowship program at Johns Hopkins?

After touring Hopkins and meeting Kelly Casey (fellowship director) at my interview, I was sold by her passion and the environment of learning and patient care at Hopkins. The structure of the program was incredible and provided me with learning opportunities that I knew I couldn't otherwise find.

What were your general responsibilities as a fellow?

My responsibilities were divided into clinical care, didactics and research. Depending on the day, I would be treating patients independently, seeing patients with a designated mentor and working on my weekly assignments. I contributed to an IRB-approved research study, educated new hires and Level II occupational therapy students, and even performed a literature review to obtain grant funding for new equipment.

What was your caseload like and what kind of patient populations did you work with?

My caseload varied by day, but I averaged approximately 27–30 hours of patient care per week. I rotated through general medicine, neuro, cardiac, surgery, medical ICU, oncology and burns. During each of these rotations, I had modules with specific diagnoses to focus on and research best practices for.



Iannuzzi and her colleagues during CPAM lab.

Name one (or several) important things you've learned from your mentors in the program.

Each of my mentors helped me grow tremendously in my patient care due to their unique and distinct approaches to acute care. On a personal level, they also served as incredible role models.

Were there activities outside work that helped you make friends and maintain work-life balance?

Rotating services enabled me to become friends with many members of the rehabilitation team. I also shared an office with the other acute care rehabilitation residents and fellows. We became great friends over the course of the year and spent time together outside of work. We also attended a journal club with other residents and fellows and would typically organize events together after journal club.

How has this program helped you grow professionally so far?

My skillset as a clinician expanded and improved. I feel that I am now a well-rounded clinician and can participate in research, advocacy and education in addition to clinical care. I learned valuable skills that will help me work toward a leadership role such as taking fieldwork students or becoming a mentor myself.



Iannuzzi on Capitol Hill on OT Hill Day.

Any advice you would give to someone interested in this program?

If you are interested in taking your practice to the next level, this is a phenomenal opportunity. A potential fellow should be eager to learn and flexible. Being a fellow also comes with constant feedback and constructive criticism. It is important to be able to accept feedback without internalizing in order to be successful in this position.

Anything else you would like to share about this program/your experience?

I have nothing but gratitude for Kelly Casey and my mentors. Since finishing graduate school, my fellowship year was my most significant year of both professional and personal growth.