

# Allie Jones, CCLS

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION; MASTERS IN COUNSELING WITH A MARRIAGE AND FAMILY EMPHASIS (in progress)  
4 YEARS EXPERIENCE

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:9

## **Can you tell me a little bit about your hospital and the units you cover?**

I primarily cover the Pediatric Oncology and Hematology Clinic but am consulted to any of the other outpatient pediatric clinics and will occasionally provide coverage for my other child life colleagues in areas like Diagnostic Imaging and our inpatient pediatric units. We are a community hospital and a children's hospital within an adult hospital. Because of this, our child life team has the unique opportunity to frequently work with children of adult patients. I especially love these referrals to work in Adult Oncology, ICU's, Labor and Delivery, or Mother Baby.

## **What's your typical unit census and about how many patients do you see per day?**

In the Outpatient Hem/Onc Clinic I see about 8-10 kids a day for more lengthy interventions (I also only work part-time). Our Outpatient Clinic is small with the most patients we see in a day to be around 20 or so.

## **What does your average day look like?**

Is an “average day” a thing in child life? ;) I honestly don't have one! But I will share that just this week a day consisted of starting my morning first thing in our Ortho Clinic to provide preparation and procedural support for serial casting. I then went immediately to the Hem/Onc Clinic to check in and assess needs for a couple of hours. I provided support for a port access, engaged in medical play with a teaching puppet, implemented a therapeutic activity with an anxious patient, and then offered guided imagery for a patient struggling with pain and nausea. I concluded my day covering a pediatric consult for an IV start and an LP preparation for an 18-year-old and then worked with two separate consults in Labor and Delivery to help siblings adjust to a prolonged separation from their pregnant mothers with the potential for a fetal demise. In the midst of that, I am lucky if I get a few minutes at my desk to respond to emails from wish-granting organizations/donors and to formulate plans for my summer practicum student!

## **What is your favorite distraction item and how do you use it?**

I love using Easter eggs and putting little toys in them (like dinosaurs or My Little Ponies). I give the child various jobs for the procedure and for each job they successfully do (like holding their arm straight for the rubber band, keeping their arm still for the soap, and taking deep breaths for the poke), I then open each egg for each job and engage the child in play with whatever is inside.

## **What's the best part about your job?**

So many things, it is hard to narrow it down! Being able to empower children in their bravery and helping them gain mastery of their experiences. Plus, it is just so fun to play!

## **What's the hardest part in doing your job?**

Feeling like I can never do enough. It is a struggle for me to finish each day and not keep running through a list of “*what if I had done this?*” or “*I could have spent so much more time with this patient,*” or “*did I really do enough to make a difference?*” I In a world where we care for the sometimes abstract psychosocial needs, it can be a challenge to find a good metric for “success.”

## **What's a facet of your job that people wouldn't expect?**

I do a lot of event planning and love it! I plan our pediatric oncology annual parties each year as well as a hospital-wide Superhero day. Creating spreadsheets, binders and color-coded tables are my jam!

## **What's something you wish you knew when you started on this unit?**

That being young isn't always a negative thing. I replaced a seasoned CCLS and I was fresh into the field. And I felt so insecure about that! I would never try to date myself, for fear of people looking down on me and my abilities even more than I thought they already did. It is easy to buy into the belief that being “young” is code for being “inexperienced.” When all actuality, I think young can mean a vibrancy of fresh ideas, a commitment and eagerness to learn, and an enthusiasm to try new things and give it your all!

## **Do you have anything else you'd like to share about your job, tips for students, or thoughts?**

At the end of the day, there will be so many ways that child life impacts you on a deeper level than just medical terminology or child development. Child life challenges who we are as people pleasers or challenges our savior complex. Child life pushes us toward humility when we can easily sway towards pride masked by insecurity or territorial feelings of our patients. Never lose the power of reflection to be self-aware of when these “deep personal issues” arise. I challenge you to press in when you feel like you aren't enough, when you feel like you aren't worthy, or when you feel yourself unhealthily comparing yourself to others. Dig in and invite others in to help you process these growing opportunities.

