

Adina Levitan, MS, CCLS

BACHELORS OF PSYCHOLOGY; MASTERS OF CHILD LIFE, ADMINISTRATION AND FAMILY COLLABORATION
2+ YEAR EXPERIENCE

DON'T ASK YOURSELF WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS. ASK YOURSELF WHAT MAKES YOU COME ALIVE AND THEN GO DO THAT.
BECAUSE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS IS PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME ALIVE."

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

My hospital is 26-bed pediatric unit within an adult hospital that serves orthopedics, general pediatrics, hematology/oncology, neurology and PICU.

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

Our census can range from days old babies to young adults with a wide array of diagnoses. My specific population is hematology/oncology, and I may have 1-6 patients a day. I also respond to referrals in the ED, OR, Radiology, and NICU

What does your average day look like?

In a typical day, I will arrive to my unit, collect my census and check patient charts. Then I will round on my patients with nursing and/or physicians. After getting plans of care for the day, I check in with my patients to assess their coping, provide emotional support, normalization and play and respond to referrals for support as procedures happen. I interact with patients at the bedside and in the playroom. I may have events (or virtual events due to coronavirus!) and special visitors to bring to the patients. If I have a new diagnosis, my day looks very different as I am preparing them for many procedures and tests while providing emotional support to family for their new reality. I aim to spend a lot of time with these patients just building rapport and may not even introduce medical play or diagnosis education until we have established a trusting relationship.

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

I love bubbles to promote deep breathing and giggles. I also love the light spinner for its high visual impact and soothing vibrations.

What's the best part about your job?

The best part of my job is that "aha!" moment that kids have when they realize they can do difficult things and still come out smiling!

What's the hardest part in doing your job?

The hardest part of my job is having difficult conversations with kids about their diagnosis, prognosis and what to expect during treatment. It is also difficult when I have run into a wall about what interventions to offer if the patient is not coping well.

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

People expect that my job is sad all the time, however, I find I mostly have positive interactions with patients and can vastly improve their hospital experience.

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

I wish I knew that every new oncology diagnosis will never present the same, even if it is the same diagnosis.

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

Sometimes we want to think big about what interventions to use or how to support a patient but relying on the foundation of our training tends to be the best: play. Playing with a child establishes trust, promotes positive coping, normalizes the hospital and supports typical development-- this may be more essential than the best preparation or diagnosis education.

