

# Q&A With Meaghan Isaacs, Outpatient Speech-Language Pathology Fellow

Meaghan Isaacs, M.S., CCC-SLP

- **Undergraduate school:** James Madison University; communication sciences and disorders
- **Graduate school:** Loyola University Maryland; M.S. in speech-language pathology
- **Hometown:** Ellicott City, MD
- **Professional interests:** Dysphagia and aphasia
- **Fellowship completion year:** [Outpatient speech-language pathology fellowship](#), 2018



## Why did you pursue a speech-language pathology fellowship in outpatient speech-language pathology?

I want to help adults reconnect and communicate with their family and loved ones following a brain injury, whether that be after a stroke or traumatic brain injury.

## Why did you choose the fellowship program at Johns Hopkins?

I chose this fellowship program because I knew that working and learning at Johns Hopkins would offer a variety of opportunities and experiences that would be hard to come by at another medical hospital.

## What were your general responsibilities as a fellow?

Generally, I was responsible for evaluating, treating and scheduling my patients. I was also responsible for communicating with physicians, nurses and family to relay important education and request orders/referrals for additional testing.

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

My caseload was diverse throughout the course of my fellowship. I had a good balance of patients with dysphagia, aphasia, cognitive deficits and motor speech difficulties. Patient populations included patients with cerebrovascular accidents, multiple sclerosis, ataxia, Parkinson's disease, lung transplant, esophagectomy, traumatic brain injury and post-concussion syndrome, to name a few.

## Name one important thing you've learned from your mentors in the program.

I have learned to be flexible, to assess the deficits that I see as well as report patient difficulties, and the importance of providing adequate education to not only the patient but to their family as well.

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

Participating in happy hours, work volunteer opportunities and journal club with residents from other programs definitely aided in maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

## How has this program helped you grow professionally so far?

This program has opened my eyes to the importance of collaboration among disciplines (physical therapy, occupational therapy, etc.) and how to incorporate principles and strategies accordingly.

## What advice would you give to someone interested in this program?

I would advise someone interested in this program to seek out additional learning opportunities through observation of interdisciplinary opportunities. Speech-language therapy is an essential part of a patient's recovery, and strategies can be used in conjunction with their physical therapist and occupational therapist.

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

Johns Hopkins allowed me to become a well-rounded speech-language pathologist and provided so many opportunities to work with patients with rare diagnoses, which furthered my learning. I am very grateful to have had this experience and to continue my learning as a full-time employee.