

“Tapping” into Care: An Interview with Dr. Michelle Palumbo

Please tell us about your area of expertise and why you chose to specialize in that area?

Broadly, my area of expertise is in the treatment of psychiatric disorders in individuals with autism spectrum disorder and genetic syndromes, like Down syndrome. I chose this area based on some personal experiences in childhood, including some friends that I connected with who had special needs that made a big impact on me.



What would you say is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

I've been here at the Lurie Center for almost 10 years. Some of the people that I've worked with have been with me since that time and watching them grow has been the most wonderful and rewarding part of my job. Regardless of their path--whether through a day program, college, or employment--it's been so amazing to get to know them over many years and see their development and progress over time.

What breakthroughs do you hope to see in the future within ASD research?

I would love to see more research into specific treatments for psychiatric disorders, as well as more research and treatments for some of the core features of ASD, such as communication challenges.

What do you believe to be some of the most pressing health issues today and why?

I think access to care is the big one. There are long waitlists everywhere for patients and families to get the care they deserve. There are just not enough people out there who do what we do here at the Lurie Center. We need more people (doctors, nurses, social workers, etc.) to become interested in this field so that more people can be helped. There is a particular shortage of providers equipped to support the growing tide of adults with ASD.

What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

I love dancing and community theater! If I hadn't gone into medicine, I would have been a Radio City Rockette!! I've been tap dancing since I was five years old.

Please tell us a little bit about your research interests.

My research interests include treating co-occurring psychiatric problems, like anxiety and depression, in individuals with ASD and related conditions. I have strong interest in the treatment of psychiatric disorders in people with Down syndrome across the life span.

Do you have any pets?

I have a Norfolk terrier, Sir James. I hope to someday teach him to be a therapy dog, but that might be wishful thinking. He loves people, but I think he's a bit too stubborn to take on that job!

Do you have a favorite book, movie, or tv show?

My favorite movie is Singing in the Rain. It is my favorite because it has a lot of great dance numbers.

What were you like as a highschooler?

In high school, I was voted most likely to be on Broadway!

Many thanks to Dr. Palumbo and interviewer, Camila Canales, a clinical research coordinator at the Lurie Center.

To see studies being conducted by Dr. Palumbo click [here](#).

Dr. Palumbo is a pediatrician and a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Lurie Center and a clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Palumbo joined the Lurie Center in August 2013, after completing a triple board residency program in Pediatrics/Psychiatry/Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Warren Alpert School of Medicine of Brown University.

As a triple board trained physician, Dr. Palumbo treats both the medical and psychiatric aspects of autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. Dr. Palumbo works with the patients and their families to develop a comprehensive treatment plan that may include medications and other forms of therapies in order to address each individual's and families' needs, as well as focusing on optimizing each individual's and families' strengths and abilities.