

## Introducing Dr. James Powers, a New Addition to Lurie Center's Psychiatry Faculty

The Lurie Center is pleased to welcome Dr. James Powers, the newest member of our psychiatry faculty. In this interview, Dr. Powers shares what drew him to the field, his vision for the future, and why the Lurie Center feels like home.



### **Where are you from and where did you grow up?**

I was born and raised here in Massachusetts, on the North Shore. I spent all of my childhood in Beverly with my three siblings before going off to college at Duke University.

### **Did you always plan on staying in Massachusetts?**

I was at Duke for about nine years total. I studied Neuroscience as an undergraduate, stayed an additional year after graduating to do research in the neuroscience department, and then I decided to stay there for medical school. I knew eventually I wanted to come back to the Massachusetts area. All of my family's up here, and most of my connections are here. So the goal was always to come back to Massachusetts, but it was nice to spend time in a different part of the country for a little while.

### **Do you have any pets?**

I have a dog. His name is Mateo. He's a Yorkipoo and he's great. He's just turned six years old and he has a lot of character.

### **How do you practice self-care?**

Mainly through exercise. Having a consistent routine helps keep me grounded and energized.

### **What drew you specifically to the Lurie Center for Autism?**

Even before medical school, I was drawn to neuroscience and medicine, and I knew I wanted a medical career where I could work with both children and adults. Early on, I considered fields like neurology, psychiatry, and ophthalmology. But a few years into medical school, I realized I truly enjoyed psychiatry in a way that surprised me—it felt like the right fit. With my longstanding

interest in neuroscience, working with children and adults with neurodevelopmental disorders came naturally.

During my psychiatry residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital, I connected with a few excellent mentors here at the Lurie Center for Autism and began getting involved in research projects, which really shaped my career interests. I continued my involvement with the Lurie Center throughout my time in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital and, after finishing up fellowship, I was fortunate to be able to launch my own career here. While the research opportunities initially attracted me to the Lurie Center, it is the people—both the staff and the patients and families we serve—who truly make this an exceptional place.



*Dr. Power's Yorkipoo, Mateo.*

**Is there one moment that stands out to you as a highlight in your medical career?**

I don't know if it's one moment in particular. It feels like it was a lot of little moments that built up over time that pushed me down this path. I think a big one is my graduation from fellowship. It's a long path, and in some ways, it feels like you're at the end of your medical training, and on the other hand, it feels like you're really just getting started.

**Having so much of your career still ahead of you, is there anything specific you hope to accomplish?**

Right now, I am just hoping to determine the balance between research, clinical care, and education that feels right to me. This is something everyone has to consider, how do you want to devote your time when there are only so many hours in the day?

**If you were to describe yourself in three words, what would they be and why?**

Maybe “easy-going”, “hard-working”, and “efficient.” I try to live my life in a flexible and “go with the flow” type of way, but at the same time I am really intentional about how I choose to spend my time.

**What do you like to do for fun?**

I love pretty much anything on the water, particularly the ocean. I also love going for walks, going out to eat, spending time with my dog and my partner, traveling, and exercising too.

*Thank you to Dr. Power's interviewer, Mallory McDaniel, a Lurie Center for Autism Summer Research Intern. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*