

Gina Kiefer, MSOT OTR/L

How did your experience at USI help you find your first position after graduation?

**When I was in my undergraduate at USI, I did my practicum at Newburgh Healthcare with the Activities Department (although I wanted to go into Occupational Therapy). With the helpful advice from Kathy at the USI Career Center, I used this time to learn more about myself and why I wanted to go into a healthcare field. After learning I was occupational therapy program at USI, I was provided with bountiful opportunities to learn about different areas of practice. I did my fieldwork at the University of Louisville, Richmond Hospital, Good Samaritan Home, and lastly at Owensboro Health Regional Hospital. OHRH was my last level 2 fieldwork and this is where I knew I wanted to go into the acute care of therapy. I was very blessed and grateful when they offered me a position as an OT. I worked on a temporary license until I learned that I passed my boards in August. OHRH has already given me so many opportunities as a new graduate. I am forever grateful!**

If you had it to do all over again, what would you do differently?

**Absolutely not. I could not imagine doing something other than being an occupational therapist.**

On a typical day in this position, what do you do?

**I have been working at the Owensboro Health Regional Hospital as both in the acute setting, as well as working at the Owensboro Wound Healing Center. In the acute side, I work alongside many different healthcare professionals to determine what that patient's prior level of function was and what is most important to the patient. At the WHC, I assist with treating lymphedema and educating patients on this condition.**

What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?

**I think the personal qualities that are important for being a successful occupational therapist is being kind, having patience, and listening. Staying organized and positive are also very important.**

What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?

**There are thousands upon thousands of advancements in this field. I can become specialized in a certain area such as being a neonatal OT, certified lymphatic therapist, or being an OT working with hospice care. Whether you are interested in kids, wounds, elderly, neuro, etc., occupational therapy always has areas to advance.**

Is there a demand for people in this occupation?

**There is a demand for people in this area. However, I learned really quickly that being in Southern Indiana, this area is quite saturated. You have to be able to set yourself apart from other and thankfully I was able to do that with my experiences and education from USI.**

What do you think of the experience you've had so far in terms of entering this field?

**I know that all my hard work has finally paid off. I learned as long as you have a goal in your mind, you can conquer all. I also learned that it is okay to not be perfect and the imperfections that occur only make you a better person and therapist.**

If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?

Why? What would you change?

**I would never change anything. I would not change the school or the education I received at USI. I loved every minute, despite the long hours in the library and many, many hours of studying. I was blessed with meeting the absolute best faculty, professors, and classmates while I was in school.**

What part of this job do you find most satisfying? most challenging?

**The most challenging part of my job is staying up to date on all the different diagnoses and changes in insurance. The most satisfying part of my job is seeing that what I am doing is meaningful and making a difference in someone's life. I may not be able to add days to someone's life, but I know I can help add life to their days.**