

San Diego Woman Magazine

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SPECIAL
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ISSUE

Kristine Daugherty,

PA-C, MPAS, MIM, MBA

Physician Assistant and Clinical Consultant

By Judith A. Habert

Kristine Daugherty knew from an early age that she was destined to go into the medical field. She had a giving heart and helped to take care of her great grandmother when she was just a young girl. What sealed the deal for Kristine was the changes she saw. "I saw a marked difference in my great grandmother when she was given the care she needed. I was fascinated with some of the differences I saw in her health and loved seeing her quality of life improve right in front of my eyes. Sometimes it was from a simple medication change or the coordination of care she received from different specialists. I knew that I was destined to have a career in medicine after volunteering at a skilled nursing facility when I was 12 years old. I will always treasure this experience as it was so rewarding to establish meaningful relationships with the residents and to support them with day to day activities. As a senior in high school, I was granted several scholarships to study advertising and marketing in college, so I ultimately decided to complete my undergraduate degree in business. I chose to take advantage of my scholarships and planned to go back and later in life to pursue a career in medicine."

Her original area of interest led her to consider attending medical school to become a surgeon. However, while in school Kristine realized that this career path would not satisfy her need to help her patients on a long-term basis, "Since a surgeon only sees patients for a few appointments, before and after surgery, I soon realized that being a surgeon was not the right path for me. What gives me the most satisfaction is having a long-term relationship where I could work with a patient on an ongoing basis and help to improve their quality of life."

When it came time to consider her postgraduate study, she pursued her PA. C, which is a course of study that leads to a Physician Assistant designation. The C is for a PA who is certified by the National Commission of Certification of PAs. Kristine soon found out that she made the right decision. Today she works with patients in a wide variety of areas. "I really am passionate about utilizing different therapies that allow the body to heal itself."

I asked Kristine what her favorite part of her job was. "I truly love hearing success stories from my patients and supporting them in achieving their health/wellness goals. This can vary from achieving weight loss goals, increas-

ing mobility after a musculoskeletal injury, improving chronic pain, eliminating the need for medications due to lifestyle changes, or supporting them with chronic diseases such as diabetes. I am very passionate about educating patients on nutrition, complementary and alternative medicine, and the mind-body connection. I use a variety of tools such as supplements, light therapy, mindfulness practices, peptides, and much more to support patients with chronic medical conditions, nutrient deficiencies, anxiety, depression, insomnia, gut issues, and other health concerns.

"It is so amazing and fulfilling for me to have my patients come back for a follow-up visit and have them tell me how much better they are feeling. They are often amazed that their sleep patterns have improved. They have renewed energy and are possessing less anxiety. Many of my patients feel as if they have a new lease on life and can suddenly enjoy simple things like picking up their grandchildren. When they reach weight loss goals, they suddenly find that they

can workout and enjoy activity they could not before. I have had patients who were battling depression and after teaching them mindfulness and breathing techniques, they realize that they can control their moods without utilizing traditional medication."

Kristine is one of the most knowledgeable medical professionals that I have spoken to over the years and she does not take her job lightly. From our interview it was easy to see that much time and thought have gone into her acquiring such a wide range of knowledge in so many different specialties.

"I practice in regenerative medicine, integrative medicine, and functional medicine. I work at getting to the root cause of why my patients are

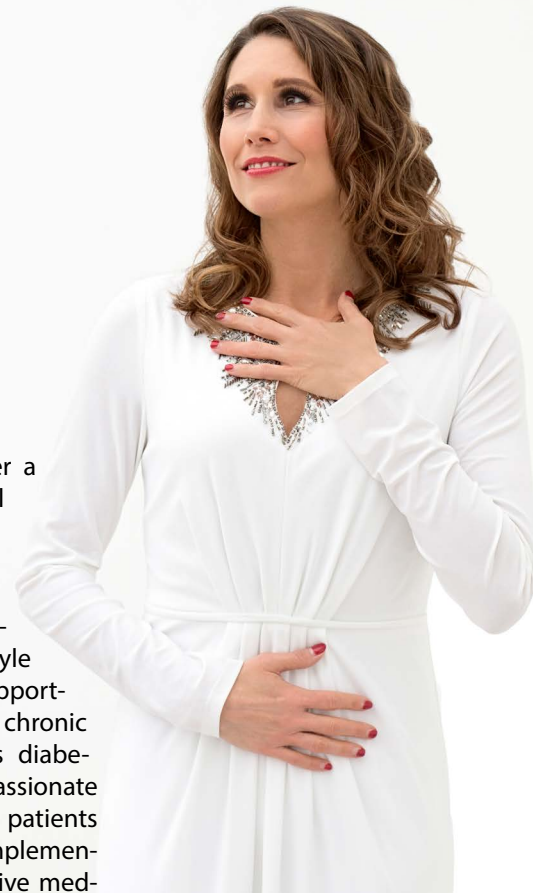


Photo by Margot Duane

having the symptoms they are experiencing. I see patients through a variety of practices, and I am in the process of establishing my own practice as we speak." Kristine believes that treating her patients with a combination of Eastern and Western medicine gives them the best chance of leading happier and healthier lives.

With Kristine's background in marketing and advertising, and her medical expertise, she also does consulting work for other medical professionals who are trying to start their practice or improve an existing practice. "I consult with medical professionals/practice owners and provide strategies to increase patient satisfaction, implement new service offerings, improve efficiency, and enhance patient outcomes. Many clinicians learned how to treat patients, but they were not taught how to run a successful practice. By optimizing processes, procedures, and billing, the clinician then has more time to spend with their patients."

Kristine is one of the most knowledgeable medical professionals that I have spoken to over the years and she does not take her job lightly. From our interview it was easy to see that much time and thought have gone into her acquiring such a wide range of knowledge in so many different specialties. "My practice includes regenerative medicine, functional medicine, pain management, weight loss, nutrition, control of diabetes, insomnia, thyroid disease, autoimmune disorders, Lyme disease, mold toxicity, antiaging, and sexual wellness. I also work with individuals who are looking to optimize their overall health and wellness.

A common complaint from Kristine's patients is the need to improve the quality of sleep. She was kind enough to share with us some information on improving sleep.

Before I would suggest

Are their feet actually touching the earth or in San Diego, the sand to gain the benefits of earthing/grounding as a way to promote restful sleep. I always suggest that they try to do so if only for a few

before bedtime. Downloading relaxation apps such as Insight Timer, Breethe, Calm, or Headspace and trying to play them every night before bedtime. Make gratitude lists showing what you accomplished that day and if you have items you did not get to create a to-do list for the next day. This allows you to shut your mind off, which is often what keeps us awake at night. We sleep better when we are cool so, lower the temperature at home for better sleep and limit caffeine intake. This is great information for us all and the list does not end there. Kristine is a wealth of information on how to get more restful sleep. I strongly recommend seeing her if insomnia is something from which you are suffering.

When it comes to weight loss, Kristine has a unique approach. "I have a little different approach when it comes to weight loss. Initially, I will evaluate the stress level of anyone desiring to lose weight. What is their overall satisfaction, how happy are they in their life, in all areas of life? Are they happy with their relationship with themselves, relationship with a spouse or significant other, family, friends, professional career, personal hobbies, etc. This allows me to identify emotional triggers that may be contributing to overeating. Are they holding onto this weight as a form of protection? Is there some sort of underlying fear especially right now, I am hearing a lot of patients coping with the fear, the anxiety and the uncertainty of COVID 19 and what their lives will look like, next week or next month, or next year, because there is still so much uncertainty across the United States.



Photo by High Voltage Agency

any treatment, I would look at a person's normal daily routine and sleep hygiene to identify anything that could impair restful sleep. I would ask them what time they usually eat dinner, what time they go to bed and how much time exists between the two. What kind of exposure are they having to blue lights from their cell phones, iPads, computers, television or even blue light from overhead fluorescent lighting? Are they consuming alcohol? Are they getting any sun exposure during the day?

minutes during the day. This helps to reset their circadian rhythm. I would also probe further and ask questions about where their Wi-Fi was located in their house, and are they putting their phones on Airplane mode when they go to sleep?

To help improve sleep, I would suggest some of the following: Blue blocker eyeglasses to use after dinner time to reduce blue light exposure, especially if someone is not able to stop using electronics at least two hours

Many people turn to food as a coping mechanism. So, I look at the eating patterns and habits and we work on some of that as well. Then I look at nutrition. What are they putting in their body? Are they selecting organic produce, grass fed beef, and free-range chicken? If not, I educate them on the health and nutritional benefits of selecting such items.

My next step is analyzing whether they are eating foods that are known to cause inflammation in some individuals. What does their gluten intake look like? What does their dairy intake look like? Processed sugar is often a problem for many people. Frequently, people are unknowingly consuming much more processed sugar than they think because it is added into many foods we eat. Then after I look at what they are eating, I assess how frequently they're eating and what time they eat meals. I don't recommend diets; I suggest lifestyle modifications that set patients up for success by incorporating nutrient-dense foods that are tailored for their individual needs. I truly believe that food is medicine and selecting the right foods can improve micronutrient deficiencies, decrease inflammation, and much more!

Next, I will suggest detoxification protocols that will support with gently removing toxins and address any gut health issues present. I

often suggest intermittent fasting for patients due to the numerous health benefits that it offers. My patients are often pleasantly surprised, that just minor changes can have some pretty impressive results in getting them back in shape, healthier and happier.

I asked Kristine what suggestions she could impart on anyone who wanted to become a physician assistant. "My advice would be to spend as much time as you can with various different specialties. Prior to making the selection to become a PA, I found it incredibly valuable to shadow and to talk to as many doctors, PAs, nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, and physical therapists as I could. That's truly what led me to the decision to be a PA.

Kristine has spent hundreds of hours in the last few months being a support for many of her patients who have been experiencing increased stress levels because of the pandemic. She has been a rock for many of her patients who knew that she would always be there for them to talk things through and not panic in the face of the uncertainty. At San Diego Woman Magazine, we would like to thank Kristine Daugherty for all she has done to help us through a very tough time. She is without a doubt a shining example of a San Diego Woman Magazine Woman of Distinction.

For more information on Kristine go to:

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