

Get to Know NYCPM Faculty: Adam Bernatsky, DPM ('16) *Clinical Instructor, Dept. of Surgery*



Dr. Adam Bernatsky followed the prestigious path of pursuing his doctorate at NYCPM (graduating in 2016) and then went on to complete his residency at NYCPM as well (graduating in 2019). He then decided that he wanted additional training and pursued a Foot and Ankle Trauma & Reconstructive fellowship at the University of Louisville Hospital for the 2019 – 2020 year. The hospital, one of the largest in Kentucky, is also a Level 1 trauma center.

While Dr. Bernatsky says his “training as a resident at NYCPM was great,” with lots of surgical experience, he said that he had always had the idea of pursuing a fellowship, one in reconstruction and trauma. Thanks to the fellowship he completed, Dr. Bernatsky, now an attending at Metropolitan and Lincoln Hospitals, says that he sees things differently. He now has more in his repertoire, and more confidence. He has seen the different options offered in his Louisville setting, and now feels he has a more nuanced approach to surgery; he’s seen different approaches -- in terms of cuts, sutures, screws, for example. It’s “made a huge difference,” and given him a bigger procedure selection with “positive outcomes for the patients.”

Another difference he learned, is the difference between city trauma and more rural trauma; the city has ‘lower velocity trauma’ – trips, falls off a bicycle – and Louisville had ‘higher velocity trauma’ – motor vehicle accidents, with victims helicoptered in from 50-100 miles away. Another big difference was the patient population; his supervising trauma surgeon, Dr David Seligson, insisted Dr. Bernatsky really get to know his patients, including careers, home environments, pets, etc. That is something he states he will never forget!

These are lessons he’ll apply throughout his career, he said. Another lesson learned (that’s not geographically specific): how hard it is to communicate with patients when masked. He learned that it’s more difficult for patients to trust their doctors without fully seeing their faces, and trust in a surgeon is paramount.

Now, as a recent NYCPM graduate who’s also on the College faculty and an attending, Dr. Bernatsky has some words of advice for current students. He urges students to get involved in extra-curricular activities, e.g., podiatric clubs or the student association, for example; to read; and to develop their patient communications skills (very important). He also tries to let his students know how important it is to get to know their patients. He also recommends fellowships – if they’re a good fit.