Passion and Authenticity. These are the qualities that Meagan first referenced as key to growing her global health career. As an undergraduate, Meagan knew that she wanted to focus her career on gender-based violence (GBV), but wasn't sure what that would look like.

"I knew that I needed to find different types of experiences to find out what I wanted to do."

For her, these experiences included learning from conferences, working on grassroots health campaigns, and ultimately pursuing her Master's in Public Health. After graduating, she knew that classroom experience wasn't enough; building a skill-set to tackle GBV would require the right mentorship to guide her on her career path and achieve her goals. Working for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was one of her top goals, and in 2016, Meagan applied and was accepted as a Global Health Fellow.

THE FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE:

As a Fellow, Meagan spent time working at CDC headquarters in Atlanta and in the field abroad on GBV and its direct and indirect links to HIV. Much of her time was spent at PEPFAR-supported facilities developing and implementing the GBV Quality Assurance Tool, which she describes as "an adaptable resource for health providers, facility managers, and program planners to assess, improve, and ensure the highest quality of post-violence clinical care in health facilities."

Seeing how influential this work was in creating improvements to the roll-out and empowering in-country leaders to assume ownership of the tool was a humbling reminder:

"I am reminded of the incredible responsibility we as public health professionals have to the populations we serve across the globe."
2019 POST-FELLOWSHIP HIGHLIGHTS:

Presented on barriers to disclosure of child sexual abuse at the 2019 Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum in Cape Town, South Africa

Co-Author on “Scaling Up Testing for Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection Among Contacts of Index Patients - 20 Countries, 2016-2018”

CDC Award Recipient for Excellence in Surveillance and Health Monitoring (International), based on the Violence Against Children Survey in Zimbabwe

COUNTRIES TRAVELED TO DURING FELLOWSHIP:

- South Africa
- Zambia
- Uganda
- Zimbabwe
- Mozambique
- eSwatini
- Namibia
- Kenya

FAVORITE TRAINING AS A FELLOW:

- Researching Gender-Based Violence: Methods and Meaning, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

The fellowship served as a foundation for Meagan’s current role as a CDC Health Scientist. In this role, she draws from her strong skill-set in health communication, crisis intervention, data collection and analysis, program implementation, evaluation, and leadership training.

As a Fellow, Meagan pursued various training opportunities, and she felt both valued and support by CDC staff. Beginning a new position can be intimidating for anyone, but exposure to learning opportunities, mentor support, networking through shared interests with co-workers, and strong friendships built across her fellowship cohort contributed to a positive work environment.

HER CURRENT ROLE FOR CDC:

Meagan continues working to end violence globally against women and girls, men and boys, and striving to impact HIV epidemic control. Megan has worked across diverse settings in Africa, Asia, and North America, with an emphasis on ensuring and establishing high quality post-violence clinical services and evidenced-based prevention.

"In recognizing the progress and shared responsibility to end the HIV epidemic, I look forward to contributing to the momentum of ending violence in all forms."

ADVICE FOR FUTURE FELLOWS:

"Find allies within what you want to do and who will advocate for your involvement. This could be your mentor, but don’t be afraid to put yourself out there to connect with [other CDC employees]. Find opportunities to share your interests creatively, because there’s no lack of need."