



# ONYX THERAPY GROUP NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020

## ONYX THERAPY GROUP BECOMES DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MEDICAID PROVIDER

Onyx Therapy Group is now certified as an official DC Medicaid provider. DC Medicaid is a healthcare program that pays for medical services for qualified people who live in the District of Columbia. It helps pay for medical services for low-income and disabled people who do not have health insurance. Medicaid pays healthcare providers, which include: doctors, hospitals, and pharmacies that are enrolled with DC Medicaid. Eligible services include: doctors visits, hospitalization, eye care, dental, medical equipment, transportation, and other related medical services.

“Becoming certified as a DC Medicaid provider gives Onyx Therapy Group greater access to populations needing mental health services,” states Maegan Marcano, Onyx Therapy Group COO.

Onyx Therapy Group provides mental health services, which includes: therapy, counseling, professional development, research consultation, and sourcing. As a DC Medicaid provider, Onyx Therapy Group will now be able to provide these services to lower income communities that are more at risk for trauma and other psychological stressors. This falls in line with Onyx Therapy Group’s mission, as a black, woman and veteran owned company, which specializes in providing services to minority groups, including: women, people of color, and LBGTQ communities.

### “LEARNING LOSS” AND KEEPING KIDS ENGAGED DURING COVID-19

**APRIL 29** - Ayana Malone, Director of Educational Programming at Onyx Therapy Group, provided a virtual session to the Parent-Teach Association for Friendship Schools, on “learning loss” and keeping kids engaged in learning in a different way, during the quarantine.

- TOPICS OF DISCUSSION INCLUDED:
- Keeping school and activities meaningful
  - Exercising at least 15 minutes per day
  - Establishing schedules and rituals
  - Learning something new
  - Taking breaks

### Bored Now?

5 Ways To Keep Your Chin Up

- Keep It Meaningful**  
Make sure your children are doing activities meaningful to them outside of school-work. If they are old enough to know what's happening, use that! Example: make a virus-fighting comic strip on a number of free sites.
- Have rituals.**  
Keeping schedules and rituals are key. Bedtime routine, wake up routines (yes, get up early!), cooking/food routines. Weekend routines (chores, brunches) too. The sense of normalcy is hard to hold onto. Key? Make them fun or different from the usual. Example: have school-age kids organize the cabinets and challenge them to write a recipe. YOU cook the recipe and see what happens!
- Exercise at least 15 minutes a day.**  
Exercising has an influence on your brain, on your mood, on your ability to learn. Do more if you are inclined. Find videos on YouTube that reflect things they like. (and yes, learn to TIKTok if you must.)
- Take breaks.**  
Prevent burnouts by stopping what you are doing and do something else. Create a different atmosphere, add some variation in your routine. Take the time to cook together, read together, or just hang out and TALK (not watch TV). Your children also need to see you in a calm and reassuring place.
- Learn something new.**  
Learning helps to create new connections in your brain. This may take some work to figure out WHAT your child may want to learn but it is worth the investment.

Source



## DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND COMMUNITY LIVING DURING COVID-19

**MAY 1** - Onyx Therapy Group is offering their services to the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) during the COVID-19 pandemic. DACL is a part of The District of Columbia's Office on Aging, which develops and carries out a system of health, education and social services for the District's older adults (60 years and older), people with disabilities (18 years and older), and their caregivers. Seniors are more vulnerable of becoming affected by COVID-19. "Due to COVID-19, many services have slowed down, which impacts seniors' ability to get to essential places, including grocery stores. Their families are unable to visit them as frequently because of the quarantine policies. Moreover, the mental health providers that support them through DACL are now feeling disempowered because the social issues we are facing are far beyond what they can predict. Many mental health workers are finding themselves experiencing secondary trauma," says Dr. LaNail R. Plummer, CEO of Onyx Therapy Group.

Onyx Therapy Group will be assisting these mental health workers who are experiencing symptoms of secondary trauma using their own counseling and wellness model. The aim of this collaboration is to ensure that DC workers supporting seniors have avenues to process their clients' situations as well as their own.

## ONYX THERAPY GROUP AND STEEL SMILING: DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**MAY 6** - Dr. Plummer and Julius Boatwright of Steel Smiling (Headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA) spoke candidly about the implications of COVID-19 and the black community. The conversation focused on mental health but addressed the historical factors of slavery, Jim Crow, segregation and the implications on current "stay at home orders". Additionally, they covered content related to class segregation within the race and the implications of isolation and mental health.

[CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO!](#)

Wednesday, check me out as I hit a national platform, discussing COVID-19, stress mgmt, & emotional regulation

steelSmilingPGH

Online Experience

**DR. LANAIL R. PLUMMER**  
Clinical Director | Licensed Professional Counselor | Army Veteran

**DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

From now through the end of May, we're coordinating weekly digital mental health and wellness experiences for our communities. We're committed to supporting you in this time of physical distancing and collective transitions.

THIS ONLINE EXPERIENCE WILL INCLUDE A 30 MINUTE VIDEO ON:

STRESS MANAGEMENT + EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Date: Wednesday, April 8th at 6PM on @SteelSmilingPGH

\*This digital mental health and wellness experience will be pre-recorded.\*

www.steelSmilingPGH.org | info@steelSmilingPGH.org | 412.522.8458

## STAFF WELLNESS AND APPRECIATION IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

**MAY 7** – Hosted by Ed Plus Consulting, Dr. Plummer and a panel of educators spoke about the importance of staff wellness in the time of COVID-19. During this pandemic, teachers and administrators may have to be more flexible than any other professional. This is especially true, as they adapted their classrooms from big beautiful spaces to online formats and virtual platforms. Additionally, teachers have created different relationships with parents that went beyond the home-school connection to being a tutor of technology, modems, Zoom, and more. Lastly, they have had to make emotional adjustments, in knowing that some of their students are not living in the best conditions and must endure more than “staying in the home.” Due to these reasons, in collaboration with their own personal lives and changes, Ed Plus Consulting hosted a discussion with education leaders and Dr. Plummer to discuss the best ways to support teachers and school-based staff members.

**CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO!**

## WHAT IS DISCOVER-U HEALTH?

DiscoverU Health is a home care and chronic care agency that focuses on helping people achieve measurable health outcomes. Their mission is to make a positive impact by enhancing clients' quality of health and life one step at a time. In addition to offering health care and quality of life services to clients, DiscoverU Health trains and mentors future healthcare leaders.

As a privately owned and operated healthcare provider, DiscoverU Health considers it an honor to serve individuals and families throughout the District of Columbia and Maryland for 10 years. “We are committed to improving the quality of health and the lives of adults and seniors with chronic conditions,” says founder and CEO, Pamgrace Gachenge.



**SENIOR CARE**  
**10% OFF** Use Code: **CARE2020**

Improve your health and quality of life. No matter the level of care, our passionate healthcare team we develops tailored health plans just for you. Explore Home Care and Chronic Care services for a Adults and Seniors. **Services – Companion Care, Personal Care, Skilled Nursing Care, Transitional Care, Alzheimer's & Dementia Care; Mediation Support, Nutrition Support, & Fitness Support.**

### SOME COMMON HEALTH CONCERNS :



**discoverU HEALTH** **CONTACT US:** [hello@discoveruhealth.net](mailto:hello@discoveruhealth.net)  
301.363.9233 [www.discoveruhealth.net](http://www.discoveruhealth.net)

## WORKING DURING COVID-19: THERAPISTS SHARE THEIR TELEMENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES

**MAY 7** – Onyx Therapy Group’s founder and CEO, Dr. LaNail R. Plummer, was featured in an article that was published by the American Psychological Association on “Working During COVID-19: Therapists Share Their Telemental Health Experiences.” Dr. Plummer talked about how some clients are experiencing trauma-based symptoms. While others, are having socially-based responses that are related to the nationwide self-isolation and social distancing advisement. The quarantine has “forced [us] to pay attention to the people we live with and we are forced to pay attention to ourselves.” “There is no place to run” states Dr. Plummer. She suggests that people engage in “guided meditation and practice reframing negative thoughts.”



[CLICK TO READ FULL ARTICLE!](#)

## ONYX PARTNERS WITH THE NCC TO ENCOURAGE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**MAY 15** – Onyx Therapy Group is training counselors with DC Public Schools on how to use art as a modality for therapeutic communication. Due to COVID-19 and school cancellations, students are now learning virtually and spending more time at home, which means sharing space with family. As a consequence, this creates a lack of privacy for counseling sessions, especially for children in compromising or unstable situations. Onyx Therapy Group received a subcontract to train counselors on using art to communicate honestly with children despite their surroundings.

Onyx Therapy Group counselor, Yerneika Lopez, will be leading a training on art therapy as a therapeutic modality, where she will discuss the definition and history of art therapy and how clinicians/teachers can use the modality when working with students, virtually. Instead of using words, counselors give prompts to which the students respond with drawing. The counselor, then, has a chance to analyze the picture they see through the screen. This allows children to be able to express their thoughts and feelings fully, without having to compromise their safety. This is especially important for children who may be in abusive or threatening situations.



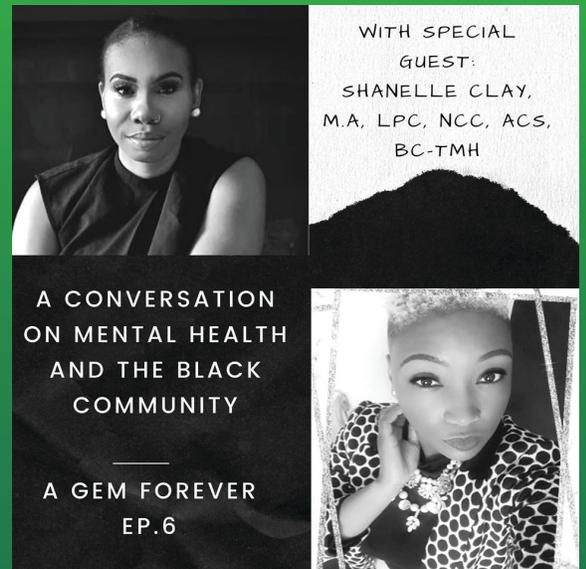


“I first learned about art therapy when teaching children diagnosed with autism. Each week, for thirty minutes, an art therapist would offer an art directive to the eight students in the classroom. The classroom consisted of students on various points of the autism spectrum, including nonverbal, socially anxious and emotionally disturbed students. Each week, every student in the classroom would sit and engage in art therapy for the duration of the thirty minutes,” stated Yerneika Lopez.

Yerneika recognized that not only is art a universal language, but it has a healing power. “Witnessing the power it had in the classroom made such an impact, that it called her back to the field. I’m looking forward to the impact that we can make and the students we can serve with DC Public Schools, during this very uncertain time.”

## LET’S TALK ABOUT BLACK MENTAL HEALTH, RELIGION, & COVID-19

**MAY 21** – Onyx Therapy Group’s Assistant Clinical Director, Shanelle Clay, was invited to talk on AGem Forever Podcast with host Andrea Jones about the state of Black mental health, the impact religion has on seeking therapy and COVID’s role in our mental health. Shanelle states that, “Black people are more prone to mental health issues due to intersectionality. It is important that they become educated and informed about the mental health issues that can impact them and those in their communities.”



WITH SPECIAL GUEST:  
SHANELLE CLAY,  
M.A, LPC, NCC, ACS,  
BC-TMH

A CONVERSATION  
ON MENTAL HEALTH  
AND THE BLACK  
COMMUNITY

A GEM FOREVER  
EP. 6

The graphic features two black and white portraits of Shanelle Clay. The top portrait shows her from the chest up, wearing a dark sleeveless top. The bottom portrait shows her from the chest up, wearing a leopard print top and a necklace. The text is overlaid on a dark background.

[CLICK TO LISTEN TO PODCAST!](#)

## ONYX THERAPY GROUP KICKS OFF ITS SELF-CARE SUMMER BRUNCH SERIES: PAINT & SIP

**MAY 24-25** – Onyx Therapy Group and RDC Art Gallery worked together to raise funds to cover the cost of mental health services for people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Onyx’s counselors were amongst a group of participants who enjoyed two separate fun-filled “Paint, Sip & Heal” sessions that were taught by Rebecca D. Crouch. They had so much fun that they look forward to the next paint



and sip activity that RDC Art Gallery will offer. The therapy of art provides increased protection of brain functions, increased awareness, improvement in problem solving skills, boost in creativity, reduction in stress levels, increase in dopamine and serotonin, more rhythmic breathing, and nostalgic memories.



## FUTURE EVENTS

- > **JUNE 7** – Self-Care Summer Brunch series: Yoga and the Power within you. Registration on our IG page.
- > **JUNE 14** – Self-Care Summer Brunch series: Waist beads and the Power of the Woman. Registration on our Eventbrite page.
- > **JUNE 15** – Launch of the Onyx Therapy Group YouTube channel, which includes: past presentations, real life discussions with friends, and the promotion of new material. Link can be found on the Onyx Therapy Group website homepage.
- > **JUNE 16** — Dr. Plummer will present at the National Board of Certified Counselors Bridge the Gap 2020 Symposium.
- > **JUNE 16–19** — Assistant Clinical Director, Shanelle Clay, will receive recognition at the NBCC Bridging the Gap Symposium: Eliminating Mental Health Disparities.
- > **JUNE 21** – Self-Care Summer Brunch series: Creative writing and poetry- Get those thoughts on paper.



## ABOUT ONYX THERAPY GROUP

Based in Washington DC, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, Onyx Therapy Group is dedicated to cultivating and strengthening the community through mental health practices. With a focus on direct clinical work, professional development/training, and sourcing, Onyx Therapy Group incorporates the values of integrity, respect, loyalty, community, culture, and excellence. As an organization, Onyx Therapy Group has over 15 years in mental health work and 20 years of education and skill-based practice that has positively impacted individuals, educators, and organizations nationally. Onyx Therapy Group is a Black, Woman, Veteran-owned business that believes in and designs transformative healing.