



ONYX THERAPY GROUP NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

ONYX THERAPY GROUP TAKES STEPS TO PROTECT THEIR CLIENTS AGAINST COVID-19

Onyx Therapy Group's CEO, Dr. LaNail R. Plummer,
sent the following message to clients and business associates

Onyx Therapy Group strives to provide our clients with transformative healing, guidance, and support by using a wide range of therapeutic techniques. Additionally, we aim to provide our consultant, training, and educational sourcing sites with the best experiences, based on research and theory. We understand that there are growing concerns pertaining to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic across the world. In response, it is important for you to know your options and alternatives pertaining to counseling sessions. Many of our counselors are Board Certified- Telemental Health Counselors (BC-TMH) and can provide these services to all our clients. Additionally, our consultants are trained and equipped to provide consultative services via a range of platforms.

WHAT IS TELEMENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING?

Telemental Health Counseling (also known as "online therapy") allows a licensed counselor to provide mental health counseling and support via HIPAA compliant online sources such as video conferencing.

Please check with your individual counselor and/or consultant to ensure they are certified to provide telemental health services.

WHAT IF I WANT TO CANCEL A SESSION?

Your health and well-being are our top priorities, please contact your counselor to discuss scheduling options. Sessions that are cancelled between 24-48 hours of the session time will not be billed. Sessions that are cancelled within the 24 hour timeframe of the session time will incur a \$75 cancellation fee.

WHAT IS ONYX DOING TO KEEP SAFE?

Onyx counselors and consultants are prepared to clean and disinfect all Onyx offices and shared spaces before and after your sessions. We will also ensure that our strategic partners are complying with local, federal, and global public health expectations.

WHAT CAN I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

Onyx Therapy Group encourages you to continue to follow the guidance of our public health authorities. If you are feeling sick, be sure to stay home and avoid interacting with others. Be sure to wash your hands frequently and cover your coughs and sneezes. For more information on safety precautions, please visit World Health Organization.



ONYX THERAPY GROUP TALKS ABOUT CULTURAL DEXTERITY AND ITS SERIES OF INNOVATIVE LESSONS ON THE TOPIC “LET’S TALK: A CONVERSATION ON RACE, CULTURE AND EACH OTHER”

MARCH 5 - Onyx's Director of Educational Programming, Ayana Malone, gave a presentation to the Board and select staff members of City Blossoms non-profit organization on the topic: Cultural Dexterity, which is the art of understanding cultural differences and navigating a variety of cultures for creating dynamic organizations and fostering a sense of team and focus on organizational goals vs. interpersonal mediation.

Onyx created an innovative and thought-provoking series entitled “Let’s Talk: A Conversation on Race, Culture and Each Other.”

The tenets of this workshop series are macro, median, and micro in perspective and address topics such as:

- Operational Definitions of Race and Culture/Self-Exploration
- Creating Space for Different Voices, Emotions and Emotional Actions of Race and Culture
- Inclusiveness Planning: Gentrification in Washington DC, The Backdrop of Whiteness and the Other in American Culture
- Strategies that Build Bridges vs. Constructing Barriers
- Inclusiveness Planning: Inclusivity, Anger, and Perspective
- Restorative Practice and Moving Forward
- Race, Culture and the Work Trauma-Informed Response “Traumatized people chronically feel unsafe inside their bodies: the past is alive in the form of gnawing interior discomfort.”

INTERVIEW OF ONYX THERAPY GROUP’S CEO DR. LANAIL R. PLUMMER

Question: When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Dr. Plummer: I wanted to be two different things. Between the ages of 8 & 10, I wanted to be a lawyer focusing on family law. By the time I was in my junior year of college, I wanted to be a forensic psychologist studying serial killers.

Question: What made you decide to go into the mental health field?

Dr. Plummer: I had a complicated upbringing. I was intrigued by behaviors that were demonstrated in my environment that weren’t demonstrated in other environments. I was also intrigued by people’s decision-making processes, like that of my mother’s and grandmother’s and the human behavior of people around



me. I also wanted to study psychology because I was interested in the minds of serial killers and how they are developed. I understood that people are not born serial killers; however there are many factors that can create this personality type. I was interested in learning more about this population so I could prevent the development of other serial killers. It is part of the reason I started working with children. I wanted to provide therapy to young people, to prevent some of the complications of mental health issues in adulthood.

Question: Is there a specific issue that is near and dear to your heart?

Dr. Plummer: I'm very intrigued by attachment disorder and the manifestation into adulthood especially in the Black community. Oftentimes, our attachment pathways have been strained due to post-traumatic slave behaviors, parenting styles, complicated family dynamics, and more. As such, we are noticing that some of our attachment styles from childhood, impacts our attachment behaviors in adulthood. Additionally, I am interested in the implications of Acute Stress Disorder and PTSD on relationships, interpersonal behaviors, and boundaries in recurring toxic encounters.

Question: Is there a theory and/or therapeutic approach that you support?

Dr. Plummer: Cognitive theory is the basis of all of my work with connections to psychoanalysis. My approach changes based on the client. However, I always see them through the cognitive lens with focus on attachment.

Question: What is your greatest strength?

Dr. Plummer: I have a really good memory. My analytical abilities. It is a natural characteristic for me, and I can hone in on it as a skill. I read between the lines and listen to what people are not saying, which leads me to my next strength – communication. I can read body language real well. I'm flexible. I recognize code switching combined with nonverbal communication.

Question: What's the greatest lesson you have learned as a mental health professional?

Dr. Plummer: People want to have internal peace despite what their external behaviors demonstrate. Where the disconnect occurs is that they don't know how to make their behaviors match the internal peace that they want.

Question: What is your most memorable experience as a counselor, educator, and CEO?

Dr. Plummer: My most memorable moments as a counselor are when clients recognize their behavior patterns and create moments of awareness that impact the cycle of change. As an educator, I have emotional highlights. I teach clinical classes before students go out in to the field, and I am invigorated in the classroom when theory comes to real life. When my students have those "ah-ha" moments as they fully understand what I have been teaching and how it applies to people. In my role as CEO, my most memorable moments include those when my counselors feel liberated and supported enough to leave their other full-time jobs and work primarily with Onyx. In these moments, I'm excited to know that I have created a space for a Black Woman to leave a job that doesn't fully see or value her, that underpays her or doesn't allow for flexibility in her life as a woman, mother, wife, or hobbyist. However, when a Counselor works for Onyx full-time, she is able to be herself, work well, be compensated above the standard rate, and live a life of balance and purpose.





ENCOURAGING COUNSELORS TO FOCUS ON SELF-CARE

MARCH 17 – Dr. LaNail R. Plummer reminds her counselors about the importance of self-care as they make the adjustments in their own daily schedules to provide services to people impacted by the COVID-19 pandemonium that is taking place in the U.S. She suggested to her counselors to engage in journal writing and explore their inner selves by meditating on the following questions:

1. Am I trying to hold on to routines, rules, or practices that have outlived their time?
2. Where in my life – and in the world – can I actively let go and open myself up to new more promising possibilities?
3. In which areas of my life do I feel hopeless and helpless that anything will change? And what small steps can I take toward improving things?
4. Where in my life am I motivated by feeling negative about myself or others – and can I make an effort to change this mindset?



ONYX THERAPY GROUP COUNSELOR SHARES HER EXPERIENCE TRANSITIONING INTO COUNSELING FULL-TIME

MARCH 23 – Ericka Nelson, counselor at Onyx Therapy Group, shares her experience transitioning into the counselling field full-time.

When I first began working as a contractor for Onyx Therapy Group, I had just received my Masters Degree from Trinity Washington University's Clinical Mental Health graduate program and was working a 9-5. I went to work during the day and saw clients in the evenings. I spent the majority of my time at the day job and wasn't happy. I dreaded going because it wasn't my dream job, and I felt it was keeping me from meeting the career goals I set for myself. One day after many challenges on the job, I decided I was finished and was going to give my all to my career as a full-time counselor.

It has been about 10 months since I left my job and began working full-time as a counselor with Onyx Therapy Group and I LOVE IT!!! There has been much adjustment to managing my own time, but I have been able to take on so many new clients and take on several new opportunities through the company. I would have never been able to grow in the fashion that I had, if I hadn't taken that leap. More joyous days are ahead and I can't wait to see what else I can learn while on this journey.

ONYX THERAPY GROUP COUNSELOR SHARES HER EXPERIENCE TRANSITIONING INTO COUNSELING FULL-TIME



MARCH 25 , BELTSVILLE, MD – Onyx Therapy Group counselor, Kristel Williams, was invited to talk on the community-based radio talk show, Community Voices with MoMo Love and DJ Fiyabone. Williams talked about mental health in the Black community: stigmas; what mental illness looks/feels like; and recognizable signs for identifying when you need help. “As Blacks, we often feel racial battle fatigue due to socioeconomic stressors, oppression and microaggressions, which is manifested in our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Counselling can assist with navigating through the depression, anxiety, anger, or intrusive thoughts that we experience, as a result,” says Williams. Also discussed, was COVID-19 and coping skills that could be used to minimize anxiety, depression, loneliness, and feelings of isolation.

FUTURE EVENTS

- > **MAY 2020 (ARLINGTON, VA):** Dr. Plummer was invited to speak at Nestle’s Black Employee Association event on mental health awareness in the African American community.
- > **MAY 2 FROM 2–4:00 PM (BOWIE, MD):** Dr. Plummer is one of the featured panellists of Bowie University’s “Let’s Talk Health Care,” which will be an interactive discussion about the current state of health care.
- > **MAY 6 FROM 9–12:00PM:** Dr. Plummer will teach a group of George Mason University’s professionals about the supervision model. Kemah Gbolokai, and Ericka Nelson will present on a to be determined mental health topic.



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.