

Your Wellness

Strategies for Mental Health, Career, and Family Success

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Dr. Recco's Corner

This might sound strange and a stretch. Right now, we are living in some exciting and exceptional times. Amid perceived chaos, upheaval, uncertainty, and illness, there remains a silver lining that is growing day by day.

The keen and wise understand that something big is already at play and is setting in place ideas and abundance that will far exceed and succeed in the troubles of the day.

What I see and know is that help is not only here, but it is digging deeper and pulling out the essentials that can carry the next generation into places of dominion. To reap the eventual benefits of today's troubles, we cannot get caught up in the politics, wars, cancel culture, and various movements that have their rightful place in society.

I dare to say that between now and the end of this year, a total overhaul and unspoken excellence will be ours for the taking. This is exciting news and something to write home about. This is the coming of the long overdue and misappropriated things coming back to our lives.

In other words, there is an expectation held by us that has to land in our lives by the end of this year. This is just how things work and fall into place for people like us. People who have done what is right, stood the test of time, held their peace, and minded their own business.

If nothing else, I'm hanging my hat on the exciting things that are befalling us all. Are you ready to hang your hat? I'm girding myself and my hopes on what is becoming more apparent. Are you girding and hoping? The window is open, and the wind is blowing. Let's both meet at the designated place and celebrate the exciting and exceptional together.



Benefitting from Mental Health Therapy

By: Chaunjona' Jennings-Verdun, Master's Level Counseling Intern

We often assume mental health therapy is only for those facing difficult times and seeking help to process their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. However, the sessions can also benefit us when we are not dealing with major challenges but want support with personal growth and improving their overall quality of life. This article shares how everyone can benefit from mental health therapy sessions.

1). Developing a Good Mental Well-Being: Mental health therapy can support overall well-being by helping people prepare for future challenges. Starting therapy before a problem arises can make it easier to develop a plan when difficulties occur. For example, when a family conflict or unexpected life change occurs, a person will already have healthy coping strategies in place to help them manage the situation. We should stay ready before we must get ready.

2). Developing Self-Awareness: Developing self-awareness is important for mental well-being. It involves understanding our strengths, weaknesses, and behaviors. Greater self-awareness can improve emotional regulation and relationships with others. In my experience as a mental health counseling intern, many of my clients enter therapy focused on changing other people or situations in their lives. Over time, they often begin to recognize their own patterns of thinking and behavior. This increased self-awareness helps them make healthier choices and improve their relationships.

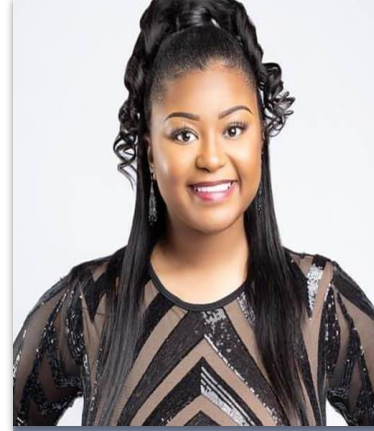


3). Personal Growth: In therapy, a treatment plan helps individuals set goals for changes they want to make over the next few months. Reaching those goals can be a rewarding experience. As mental health therapist, when completing the new client intake assessment, we are required to develop a treatment plan. The treatment plan documents the goals that clients desire to achieve.

4). Confidential and Supportive Environment: Family and friends may offer advice that is biased or judgmental. Individual and family therapy sessions provides a confidential, supportive space where individuals can speak openly without fear of judgment. As a therapist, we are required by ethical codes of conduct, to keep client's information confidential. Clients feel safe knowing their information will not be spread to others.



5). Relationships & Social Connections: Mental health counseling sessions can help people express their thoughts and emotions while also building healthier relationships. Relationships can be shaped by both positive and difficult experiences, and strong social connections play an important role in overall well-being. Research suggests that healthy relationships can even support survival by affecting biological processes such as immune function, stress regulation, endocrine function, and the nervous system (Burrell, 2023; Pietromonaco, 2017). Enjoying outings with friends or interacting with family members is a good way to form healthy relationships and social connections.



Chaunjona' Jennings-Verdun
Master's Level Counseling Intern

"Chaunjon'a is establishing herself as a quality therapist."
Dr. Recco

Welcome

To Our Team of Mental Health Therapists!



Jianda Leslie Hu, BA
Master's Level Counseling
Intern



Chaunjon'a Verdun-Jennings, BA
Master's Level Counseling
Intern



Hannah Rau, BA
Master's Level Counseling
Intern



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"Help is what we do"
Dr. Recco

Therapist's Spotlight

Featuring: Tanya Jefferson, MSA, MA, LLPC



Tanya Jefferson
MSA, MA, LLPC

"Tanya is an esteemed therapist and fixture at our counseling clinics."
Dr. Recco

Tanya Jefferson is the Therapist Spotlight for the month of July. She is a Limited Licensed Professional Counselor. When she is not working her full-time job at a local agency, she works part-time at Deborah Dewey Family Services, PLLC as a contractual Clinical Mental Health Therapist. For years Tanya has worked in the nonprofits, philanthropic, and healthcare industry.

She has been in various settings and has held many titles. To name a few, Tanya has worked as a domestic violence and sexual assault counselor, a community health trainer, and a grants program manager. She has a passion to help others and has utilized that passion to help everyone she can.

1). Why do some people avoid conflict and how can they fix this problem?

Tanya offered that sometimes people avoid conflict not out of laziness, but because their nervous system perceives tension as a threat. This is often tied to childhood experiences, past relationships or when speaking up led to rejection or hostility. To avoid the stated, she offered that people could use the following three strategies.

- a). *Understand the Root:* Recognize that avoidance is a defense mechanism from our past, not a permanent character trait.
- b). *Learn Regulation:* When tension arises, take a step back and tend to our nervous system by taking deep breaths to prevent our brain from going into "fight or flight" mode.
- c). *Practice Assertiveness:* Start with small, "micro-disclosures" or small vulnerabilities to gently express our needs instead of suppressing them.

2). What are the most important things in life?

She stated that psychological studies consistently show that the quality of our relationships is the most vital element of a good life. This is true because deep human connection buffers us against life's stresses, promotes physical and mental well-being, and adds profound meaning to our daily experiences.

3). What is the best way to mend a broken relationship?

With ease, Tany said that the best way to mend a broken relationship is to focus on three key elements. The first element is emotional regulation, taking responsibility, and addressing the root cause rather than just superficial details. The second element is to enhance dynamics such as our active listen skills and the validating of other's feelings without making assumptions. The third element is to use clear and gentle repair vocabulary that rebuilds trust over time.

4). What seems to trap your clients emotionally and socially?

In her experience, Tanya has found that clients are often trapped by unresolved deep hurts and fear of vulnerability. The trap is present because we do not process painful past experiences, and we build walls to protect ourselves. The walls can disconnect us from our true emotions and cause us to socially isolate or push others away.

5). Share the importance of addressing our deep hurts?

With a sincere look, Tanya reported that addressing deep hurts is critical because it prevents past pain from dictating our present reality. Unprocessed emotional wounds often manifest as anxiety, physical stress, and a continuous cycle of repeating past mistakes. Facing the pain allows us to heal and move forward authentically.

6). What is the best way to deal with the death of a loved one?

Tanya quipped that the best way to deal with the death of a loved one is by giving ourselves unconditional permission to grieve. As well, she stated that it is important to remember to honor our own “pace of grieving” that does not have a set timetable. It is also good for us to express our emotions through journaling and writing letters to the deceased. It is also helpful to join a support group. The groups provide an avenue to share experiences, reduce isolation, and remember that normal grief includes waves of emotion. If we cannot carry out daily routines, seeking a support group that focus is on grief is highly recommended.

7). What should a person do who wants to get ahead in life and stay there?

Tanya suggested that to get ahead and stay ahead, we can focus on continuous personal growth, take ownership of our mistakes, and maintain strict consistency. She went on to say that staying ahead requires an ongoing commitment to upgrading our skills, being adaptable, and being surrounded by people who challenge and support our goals.

8). Share with us the importance of having stability in life.

She offered that stability provides a safe and foundational base from which we can take risks, pursue goals, and handle the unexpected. Without a foundation of stability (such as securely meeting basic physical, emotional, and social needs), the brain gets trapped in "survival mode." The survival mode drains the energy we need to grow and thrive.

9). What do you encourage your clients do to improve their outlook on life?

To enhance one's outlook, Tanya encourages her clients to practice intentional gratitude, engage in mindfulness, and curate their daily experiences. Clients can also practice incorporating self-care activities in their lives such as actively savoring pleasant moments to shift focus from negative experiences to positive ones and aligning their daily habits with core values and relationships that matter most to them.

“Dealing with deep hurts is a decision.”
Dr. Recco

Getting to Know Yourself Again

By: Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

No one knows us better than we know ourselves. We are our own biggest cheerleader, worst critic, and most feared foe. Let's be honest, it has been a while since most of us "have known ourselves as we should." Somewhere along the line, we lost ourselves. We got away from our balance. We took a detour from our destined pathway and core values. We did this, and now it is time to get back to knowing ourselves again.

It is of utmost importance that we connect with ourselves again and on a deeper level. Because there is no magic wand, a concerted effort is needed to accomplish the aforementioned. As humans, when it's time to pursue and do what is most important, we often seek the path of least resistance and the easy way. One of the most difficult things to do in life is to find ourselves and protect who we are. The call for this hour is to get our bearings back by knowing ourselves again. This call is true and needed because of the following.

1). Our Importance & Purpose: There are things and ideas that we have been called to do. Our high calling and the associated goals and dreams must be fulfilled for us and others to have a chance at success. For this reason alone, it is imperative that we dig deep and find the depths of why you (and I) are important. The below chart #1 documents why you are important.

Chart #1 Why You Are Important

We need you	You're a difference maker	You're insightful
Your smile brings life	You're creative	Problem solving is easy for you
You have a way with words	You make things better	You help us feel safe
We all learn from you	You're trustworthy	Life has not defeated you
You understand us	Your words heal	We feel special when around you
You are determined	Success follows you	Life is easier with your help
You're awesome	Favor follows you	Dependable describes you perfectly
Your words are loving	You inspire others	We can look up to you
We smile because of you	You're a breath of fresh air	Knowledge respects you
Your dreams come true	You're so graceful	You make us better

We also must come to know and embrace our existence. Lastly, a solid introduction and understanding of our purpose for being on the earth is necessary. The world and other people need what we are to bring forth in brightness and truth. Thus, we must get to know ourselves again.

2). Hidden Things: Within each of us is a reservoir and wealth of goodness and great things that have the potential to turn the world upside down. We have concepts and connections in us that could very well propel society into the next great movement. We just might have within us the next discovery that changes the complexion of the world for the next 200 years. By knowing ourselves again, we can open the door of hidden things and experience breaking developments that reach nations.

**"We must know ourselves."
Dr. Recco**

4). We Are Unique: In all the world, there is only one you and one me. We are unique and wonderfully made. No one can take your place, no matter what. Years from now, the annals of time will report that there was never another person like you. Thus, there are responsibilities and tasks that you are to do because other people do not have the same calling, burden, desire, and wherewithal to do the job as you can.



**"Unity and peace
with our self is a
requirement."
Dr. Recco**

5). The Narrative: The story of our lives is still

7). Established: The longer I live, the more I realize that it takes hard work and skills to be established. Being established is also known as being grounded, settled, blessed, and in position. Once we find ourselves again, the gates and authority that govern high-level decision-making, wealth, and physical health will submit themselves to our desires and then serve as fuel to aid us.

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**"We are here to help,
here to serve."
Dr. Recco**