



Greetings!

Message from our Executive Director

Dear Odyssey Community:

The year 2020 will not soon be forgotten. For many, January was filled with typical January thoughts of a new year, a fresh start. By mid-March, we were all faced with decisions of how to best respond to our new reality. We adjusted and changed our delivery models to continue to provide ***accessible, quality, behavioral health services for our communities***. 2020 has been a rough year for many, to say the least. This year's dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice have presented many challenges. Odyssey has stood our course and we continue to be here for the communities we serve.

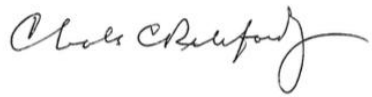
The list of what has been disrupted isn't short – birthday parties, weddings, funerals, baby showers, family traditions for holidays, or camping trips to welcome the sunshine. There are also the more routine but equally treasured times, like family dinners, school functions, sporting events, or a night out with friends. We know this disruption is causing hardships socially, emotionally, and economically. People want to get back to normal, especially now as we gear into the holiday season. Finding other ways to stay in touch and acknowledge special days is crucial. This time is stressful for many and coming together socially – even though we need to stay separated physically – is critical for mental and emotional health.

One thing that 2020 has reminded us is that change is constant and presents challenges that can be difficult to navigate, especially during such incredibly uncertain times. Our success and happiness depends on attitude and perseverance. We need to be resilient and creative and continue to move forward. As we look at change being the new normal for the foreseeable future, Odyssey will remain a resource for individuals and families. It's time to rethink change—what it means, how to handle it, and how to seize the opportunities it presents.

So, as we head into this holiday season, take care of yourself and those around you. Many of us are missing the people we can't be with in-person right now. That makes it more important than ever to be there for the people who are near you. Support your household members or, for essential workers, your coworkers. This is the time for courage and compassion. Be ready to listen and offer a friendly reminder: We've got this. We're in this together. We're all part of the team.

On behalf of the Odyssey Team, thank you for your generosity and sacrifices during 2020. We are grateful for your part in keeping our neighbors and communities healthy in mind and body. Together, let's close out 2020 with grace, gratitude, and new traditions.

Sincerely,



Charles Releford, Jr,
Executive Director

Giving Thanks



**As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches,
Odyssey would like to share some of things we are thankful for.**

"I'm Grateful for my health and the health of my family. Grateful for the special family time. Grateful for the slower pace of social life."

-Stephanie Wyatt
Member of the Board

"I think the things that I am most grateful for are connections with family and friends. Of course those connections become so negatively impacted during a pandemic like this, that I am then also really grateful for the ways that modern technology enable us to try to maintain those connections despite physical/social distance. We are currently going through such a crummy period; however, without certain forms of technology to help us overcome distance/barriers things could be so much worse."

-Ross Sloop
Member of the Board

"I'm grateful for pumpkin spiced coffee and fuzzy socks ☺"

-Ennisia Henderson, LCSW
Odyssey Clinician

"I'm thankful for a healthy family and the opportunity to work with the community in new ways! I'm thankful also for the moments of joy that shine through all the challenges of 2020."

-Ellyce Payne, MS, LAPC, NCC
Odyssey School Based Program Coordinator

"I am grateful I can find toilet paper in the store now!"

-Debbie White
Odyssey Office/HR & Billing Manager

"This may sound trite, but I would not have made it had it not been for Netflix ☺"

-Jackie Cathey, LCSW
Odyssey Child and Adolescents Services Coordinator

"Having people in my life who are filled with love and gratitude as this affects my family's wellbeing. Living in a city with pleasant weather and that has limited to no (knock-on-wood) natural disasters."

-Suraj Amarnani
Member of the Board

Odyssey's New Employee, Jackie Cathey, LCSW



Jackie has over 35 years of experience as a clinical social worker with an extensive background in School Social Work and Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Services. She holds seats on various boards including, the Atlanta-Fulton Family Connection, the Scales of Justice 411, Inc. and the Antioch AME Child Care & Development Center. She is a graduate of Benedict College and University of Georgia's

School of Social Work, in addition to being a Georgetown Fellow. Jackie is a member of Antioch AME Church's Women's Missionary Society, Steward Board #1, and the Sons of Allen Scholarship Committee. She enjoys giving back to her community and collaborating with other support organizations to address societal and environment issues impacting youth and young adults. She is a Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in addition to being a very proud mother of two children, and four grandchildren. In her spare-time Jackie loves reading a good book, watching old westerns and listening to smooth jazz.

Welcome to the Odyssey Family!

Holiday Planning and COVID



Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, holidays, special events, family outings, and celebrations have changed dramatically. For many people, this is the first time they have been confronted with empty chairs at the table because loved ones cannot or have made the difficult decision to not attend family gatherings. Cherished traditions and religious events may have been canceled due to the virus, with no clear end in sight to social distancing restrictions. People who live alone or far from family, or who have lost loved ones, may find holidays especially difficult.

These changes can trigger a variety of emotions, from grief to guilt or anger. Holidays may not be the same, however, there are various ways to find peace and moments of joy in the midst of the sadness and sense of loss that we may sometimes feel.

Here are some suggestions for handling holiday planning during the pandemic:

- Think about changing your family traditions to adapt to social distancing. If hosting a big dinner, meeting up with friends and attending holiday parties are no longer possible, consider virtual alternatives to keep in touch with important people in your life.
- Follow the CDC's recommendations when organizing a gathering at your home. If possible, hold outdoor events with a small group of local friends and family members,

make sure everyone wears a mask, maintain social distance and do not share food or drinks.

- If you have lost a loved one, honor their memory with a special ornament, wreath, or centerpiece, or perhaps a candle lit during a holiday. If you can, take part in a voluntary activity that your loved one used to do.
- If in-person religious services or events have changed see if you can still participate via televised services, video chats and online prayer meetings.

Most importantly, take care of your mental health. The pandemic has increased stress and anxiety levels for many people. If you feel overwhelmed, try to replace negative thoughts by focusing on the things you can control. Building your resilience skills can help protect your mental health.

Try these tips to use your strengths and build resilience:

- Keep connected by staying in touch with positive and supportive people, even if you cannot see them in person.
- Recharge your batteries by allowing yourself time every day to do something you like. Taking time to engage in a pleasant activity or hobby will give you a positive lift.
- Keep your sense of humor by seeking out things that make you laugh.
- Practice gratitude by focusing on the things you are grateful for every day liked loved ones and nature

For more information for a safe and healthy holiday season, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#)

GIVING TUESDAY

In this time of uncertainty, there is a fundamental truth that gives us hope - that together we can do extraordinary things. Join us December 1st for #GivingTuesday and let's rally to provide **accessible quality behavioral health services for our communities.**



Why Wait? Donate Today!

Odyssey continues to provide Telehealth Services

#BEGINYOURODYSSEY

We are accepting new clients for Telehealth

To schedule an appointment, call 404-762-9190
or email intake@odysseycounseling.org.



Donate



Visit our website



Odyssey Family Counseling Center
1919 John Wesley Avenue
College Park, GA 30337



[404-762-9190](tel:404-762-9190)



info@odysseycounseling.org