



The Armstrong Center for Hope

Psychological and Spiritual Wellness for All Ages

A THERAPIST'S PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGE

“True life is lived when tiny changes occur” (Tolstoy, n.d.). Disappointments from the past can be viewed as shattered pieces of glass, glistening in the morning sun. Changes that occur in life make me think of a favorite childhood toy, the kaleidoscope, which is made from several small mirrors, cut glass, and tiny colorful objects (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). When looking through the cylinder of a kaleidoscope, light enters the tube, creating spectral patterns. Twisting the tube causes a new pattern to emerge, never appearing the same. Looking through my therapeutic lens as I counsel clients, descriptive stories shared during sessions take shape, pieces of life’s kaleidoscope.

Individual, relational, and familial events often appear in diversified continuous patterns, affected by each person’s values, beliefs, and a myriad of personal experiences. As a therapist, my perception of self, how others see me, and an innate desire to help people enhance my ability to establish a therapeutic alliance with my clients. Curiosity, non-judgmental listening skills, and using narrative therapy techniques help clients identify unique outcomes. Using experiential therapy methods such as art, drama, or creative writing may encourage personal growth. Each client’s perspective flows through the slivered glass of the kaleidoscope, fostering the creation of unique prismatic tapestries, ultimately forming new life narratives.

Mastering the interplay between content and process also helps me successfully treat clients. I have learned that listening to client disclosures (content) during the first few sessions, establishing the therapeutic relationship, and encouraging the client to understand the meaning of and the reactions to their messages (process), fosters fresh perspectives (“What is Process,” 2018), which may lead to creating satisfying life scenarios. For example, when a client appears stuck in relational patterns with their partner due to differing perspectives about what constitutes a mutually satisfying relationship, overfocusing on content creates relational stagnation. To encourage change, I help the client focus on process.

Facilitating process-oriented discussions may help clients visualize and interpret their interactions, keep them from getting stuck in spectral patterns, as I help them understand the deeper meanings of the messages they convey. When collaborating with clients as they navigate challenging life circumstances, I realize that clients cannot be prompted to change if they are not willing or ready to do so. Using process-oriented speech promotes change. Encouraging the twisting of life’s kaleidoscope allows new mirrored images to appear, prompting the client’s authoring of new individual, relational, and familial patterns.

—Kim Nichols, MA, LMFTA



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“Every new day is a chance to change your life.”

Welcoming Our New Clinicians!

Hsiao-Wen Wang, Ph.D., LP

Hsiao-Wen Wang, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist who completed her graduate training at the University of Pennsylvania and at Sam Houston State University earning degrees in criminology and clinical psychology. She provides individual and group therapy and psychoeducational and psychological testing for children, adolescents, and adults. She also specializes in assessing and treating justice-involved youth and adults.

Dr. Wang enjoys building a collaborative relationship with her clients. Her approach to therapy is best described as integrative with a foundation in Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). However, she believes that “one rigid approach might not fit all.” She values individual differences and aims to apply empirically supported therapeutic approaches to her clients’ unique needs and strengths.

Born and raised in Taiwan, Dr. Wang also speaks mandarin. She values her own cultural experiences of being a member of a minority group in the United States and has a particular interest in multicultural and diversity issues (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status). She appreciates each client’s uniqueness in their own experiences, self-expression, and self-identity and strives to provide the client with a safe non-judgmental environment to explore themselves and grow.

During her free time, Dr. Wang enjoys spending time with her friends and family, rock climbing, practicing yoga, watching television, and crafting. Her favorite food is sushi.

Dr. Wang is currently accepting new clients, so contact our Business Office today to schedule an appointment!

Marissa Stanziani, Ph.D.

Marissa Stanziani, Ph.D., earned her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Fordham University and her Master’s and Doctorate degrees in Clinical Psychology from the University of Alabama. Her clinical work integrates cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic-interpersonal approaches alongside strength-based techniques. This has spanned treatment addressing adjustment disorders, mood disorders, and anxiety disorders regarding topics of identity, gender, and sexuality, as well as grief and complicated bereavement. Additionally, Dr. Stanziani has significant experience working with individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, particularly within the forensic psychology realm. She is trained in conducting a range of forensic evaluations, psychodiagnostics evaluations, and psychoeducational evaluations. In her spare time, Dr. Stanziani loves to read, exercise, and spend time with her partner and two dogs!

Dr. Stanziani is currently accepting new clients, so contact our Business Office today to schedule an appointment!

10 Powerful Rules That Destroy Stress

1. Disconnect

Disconnecting is the most important strategy on this list, because if you can’t find a way to remove yourself electronically from your work, then you’ve never really left work.

2. Minimize Chores

Chores have the tendency to monopolize your free time. When this happens, you lose the opportunity to relax and reflect. Schedule chores like anything else during the week and if you don’t complete them in the allotted time, move on and finish them the following week.

3. Exercise

Getting your body moving for as little as 10 minutes releases GABA, a soothing neurotransmitter that reduces stress.

4. Pursue a Passion

Indulging your passions is a great way to escape stress and to open your mind to new ways of thinking.

5. Spend Quality Time with Family

Take your kids to the park, take your spouse to their favorite restaurant, and go visit your parents. You’ll be glad you did.

6. Schedule Micro-Adventures

Try something you haven’t done before or perhaps something you haven’t done in a long time.

7. Wake Up at the Same Time

Having an inconsistent wake-up time disturbs your circadian rhythm (and can aggravate depression).

8. Reflect

Weekly reflection is a powerful tool for improvement. Use this insight to alter your approach to the coming week, improving the efficiency and efficacy of your work.

9. Designate Mornings as Me Time

Finding a way to engage in an activity you’re passionate about first thing in the morning can pay massive dividends in happiness.

10. Prepare for the Upcoming Week

As little as 30 minutes of planning can yield significant gains in productivity and reduced stress.

—Vicki Pinson, BS

“If we don’t change,
we don’t grow. If we
don’t grow, we aren’t
really living.” -Gail
Sheehy

About Our Organization

Welcome to The Armstrong Center for Hope, an interdisciplinary mental health practice for children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, groups, and organizations. Our theoretical approaches include Cognitive-Behavioral, Family Systems, Psychodynamic, and Eclectic styles. Psychoeducational and personality testing are available resources at the ACFH as well.

We currently accept several insurance plans, including Aetna, BlueCross BlueShield, Cigna, Magellan, and Medicaid. We also offer sliding scale rates to fit almost any budget. In addition to daytime appointments, some evening and weekend appointments are available. Our current hours are: **Monday-Thursday, 8 am to 8 pm / Fridays, 8 am to 5 pm**

Call for an appointment today at (919) 418-1718 or e-mail us at acfinfo@armstrongcfh.com. During COVID-19, all psychotherapy and some testing appointments are held virtually in a secure telehealth environment. Face-to-face testing will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis.

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." ~ Maya Angelou

Local Opportunities for Promoting Wellness



Redefining the New Norm

NC A&T Mental Health Summit

Dr. Tonya D. Armstrong Presenter, "The Ethics of Self-Care During COVID-19: Duty or Delight"

Friday, October 2nd 9 am to 2 pm

Dr. Kevin Cokley Presenter, "The Psychological Impact of Racism and the Imposter Phenomenon on Mental Health" Free CEUs. Join on Zoom!

Register at <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=dd1E2NekHou9M7wLHHlsOIW9F5yYzhBkta4fxoNrVUMDIxUFJXUVMyRoFDMFlJRUVINU5OWERDNi4u>

Get the SCOOP on Compassion: Cultivating Compassion for Yourself and Others. Will be held Monday, October 5th, on WebEx. Sponsored by the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services. Interested parties may register here: <https://tinyurl.com/SCOOP-Compassion>

The Impact of COVID-19 on Black & Brown Populations: Mental Health & Service Delivery

Panelist Dr. Tonya D. Armstrong. Wednesday, October 21st 6:00 pm. Sponsored by the UNC School of Social Work Black & Latinx Student Caucuses.

November Mental Health Month

Dr. Tonya D. Armstrong—Presenter First Haitian Free Methodist Church, Stanford, CT. Saturdays 10-11:30 am 11/7, 11/14, 11/21, & 11/28.

Wednesdays at the Well:

Wednesdays at the Well is a consultation group for therapists and trainees interested in integrating spirituality into mental health practice. The group meets on 4th Wednesdays from 12-1:30 pm in the ACFH Conference Room. **During COVID-19, virtual sessions are held from 12-1 pm.** RSVP and request the session link at tarmstrong@armstrongcfh.com

"Enhancing Self-Care During COVID-19." Wednesday, October 14th from 10:15-10:45 am. **Tonya D. Armstrong, Ph.D.**—presenting to staff at RN Harris.

Body, Mind, & Spirit Book Club will be reading Dr. Tonya D. Armstrong's book *"Blossoming Hope: The Black Christian Woman's Guide to Mental Health & Wellness"*. Discussion will be held online Sunday, October 25th at 7pm. Email rachaellark@gmail.com to request Zoom link.

FREE online event: How to Tame Stress and Eliminate Reactivity in Less Than 8 Weeks. Tools you need to control the stress you experience in all areas of your life. **Every Sunday @ 8 pm; Tickets at Eventbrite.com**

Natural Awakenings Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill

Whether we have financial worries, concerns about our health or fear for those we love, many of us are developing anxious feelings these days. Mindfulness meditation can help to relieve that anxiety and stress. Here are three ways you can get started today. <https://www.naturalawakenings.com/2020/03/31/305546/ways-to-calm-your-anxiety-with-meditation-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>



OUR CLINICAL STAFF:

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OUR CLINICAL INTERESTS INCLUDE:

- Stress Management
- Wellness Consultations
- Depression
- Trauma, including EMDR
- Anxiety
- Grief and Loss
- Anger Management
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Behavior Disorders
- Learning Disabilities
- Parenting
- Marriage, Family, and Relationship Issues
- African-American Concerns
- Religious and Spiritual Concerns
- Women's Issues
- Conflict in the Workplace
- Mind/Body Connection



A Word From Our Founder and CEO.

We are in the last quarter of a year like no other we've experienced in our lifetimes. Normally at this time of the year, we would be figuring out how to celebrate Halloween, Trunk or Treat, Hallelujah Night, or whatever your preferred version of the fall festival is. Maybe you'd be figuring out how to dress up, or what decorations to employ at home and at the office, or what sweet treats to buy for the neighborhood kids. You'd be making flight arrangements for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Year's Eve. Perhaps you'd be greatly anticipating "Black Friday" or figuring out more socially equitable and meaningful ways to make an impact on your community at the end of the year. Never would you have imagined that many of these plans would now be moot, and never would you have dreamed that perhaps the best gift to your loved ones would be continued quarantine.

Such is the hand that we've been dealt. Instead of complaining about highway parking lots, crowded airports, and awkward intergenerational moments at the holiday table, we may instead be lamenting our moments of loneliness. Thus, the circumstances of Coronavirus call for some different holiday strategies. Here are a few for your consideration:

- Create a new approach to connecting with family and friends over the holidays. Since even small gatherings are being associated with an increase in infections, schedule a family meeting over Zoom, Google Meets, WhatsApp, or any other mode of connection. Make an extra effort to include as many in the circle as possible, including those who may not be as technologically sophisticated (or too "evolved" to have a Facebook page).
- Rather than dispensing of all holiday traditions, work hard to preserve the ones most important to you and yours. For your holiday meal, prepare or purchase or favorite dishes and include at least one new dish that you've never served at the holidays. For example, maybe your main holiday dish can be lasagna this year!
- Don't underestimate the value of novelty. Replace unavailable traditions with something new and exciting, like decorating your home with a different color scheme or experimenting with differing types of music to put you into the holiday spirit.
- In light of the nearly universal struggles of living through COVID, give serious thought to non-material gifts you can share with your loved ones. Write a song, create an acrostic poem, or honor your loved ones with a special video dedicated especially to them.
- Remember that even if the midst of your challenges this year, there are always many others who are less fortunate. Spend some time thinking about who you can encourage with a handwritten note, phone call, text, or homemade gift. Think about those with few financial resources, the elderly, children in foster care, single friends, or anyone who may be suffering at this time.

If you, with the support of your village, can view these holidays shifts as opportunities for positive change and new experiences, you may find yourself enjoying the most meaningful holiday season of your life!