

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER



## Standing in the Gap of Uncertainty

*“Continually, we need grace, mercy, encouragement, [and] strength. These contributions are important because they strengthen the mind and spirit to blossom. And we know that once the mind is made up and the spirit has been renewed, nothing can stop us!” (Blossoming Hope, p. 51).*

What a time to be reminded of this truth, as we continue to adjust to a new season, and as we grapple with the ever-changing, unpredictable circumstances of our society and world. This reminder is needed as we enter into this upcoming holiday season, potentially with joy and warmth, on one hand, and grief and somberness on the other. It is time to actively recall the life-giving perspective that keeps us grounded, bringing back to the forefront hope that may be buried deep, acts of wellness that might feel small, and quotes from prior reads that can keep us motivated, such as the one above from *Blossoming Hope* (2018).

The current events of our society pose consequences both tangible and intangible. We look out and see the disheartening socio-economic instability, job loss for vulnerable employees, and disruptions in several types of services. Harder to see is the deeply internal, mental and emotional toll on individuals experiencing these circumstances. Standing at the center of this mental and emotional struggle is the reality of **uncertainty**.

Interestingly, uncertainty for the most part takes on a neutral definition, used to describe an outcome or situation as simply not known or certain. However, it is much more of a challenge as fallible human beings attempt to sit peacefully with the things unknown or unrevealed. Thus, uncertainty is a state commonly associated with distress and dread, as it can feel like dauntingly staring face-to-face at all we cannot control, processing our situations without total confidence that they will work out— and especially when there are real, tangible aspects of our world that warrant concern and unease, it is even harder for our minds to not fill in the gaps with intrusive thoughts and paralyzing worry.

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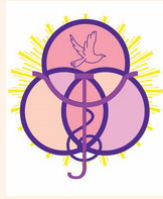
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Consequently, uncertainty can lead us to cope with our circumstances in haphazard, unhealthy ways. For instance, we may lash out at loved ones when feeling distressed or numbingly fill our minds with media to fill in the gap of uncertainty. We sometimes have a habit of turning to the things that can actually end up causing more harm to our wellbeing, relationships and future—when in the moment, it can feel like the most intuitive thing to do!

This opening article poses this urge when standing in the gap of uncertainty: **cultivating hope through tending to our mental health and spiritual wellness is a worthy investment and an essential solution reflected in our response to challenging circumstances.** This is especially true as the holidays approach.

As written in the focal quote, through a combination of **grace, mercy, encouragement** and **strength**, our mind and spirit can be renewed, and once they are, **nothing can stop us!** This means that these are the very qualities that not only can help us maintain peace and stability in the midst of turbulent environments, but they can actually set us up to tackle our challenges with deeper clarity, intentionality and impact. Thus, when standing in the gap of uncertainty, we ought to consider it not the marker of our defeat, but an opportunity to reflect these qualities remarkably in the present times.

- Kennedy Collins, BA, MA

## Mental Health and Spiritual Wellness Tips for the Holidays

**Grace, mercy, encouragement** and **strength** each carry their own approach and power for strengthening the mind and spirit to blossom, particularly during the stressors of the holiday season:

- Through **grace**, we are urged to be gentle with ourselves and others as we navigate life’s challenges and grow from them. It is remembering the awe-inspiring grace of our God (Higher Power) that is made perfect in our weakness. In the midst of holiday grief, for example, grace allows us to flexibly create new traditions.
- Through **mercy**, we are urged to accept our limitations, drawing healthy boundaries and leaning on our loved ones and community in times of need. Remembering how the tender mercies of God are renewed each day, we have refreshed opportunity to reveal a better version of ourselves, even in the hustle and bustle of the holidays.
- Through **encouragement**, we are urged to pour into the activities and people that keep us motivated and joyful. It is remembering who God says we are: capable of maintaining hope that rises above our circumstances. Encouragement allows us to bless someone else through the gift of presence.
- Through **strength**, we are urged to stand firm and persevere. It is remembering how God is our ultimate Sustainer, giving us the wisdom, discernment and power to not only carry on, but to blossom each and every day.

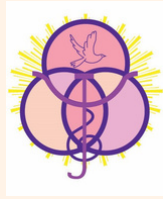


### “My Renaissance”

I needed revival of my spirit,  
 Redistribution of my thoughts,  
 Rejuvenation of dreams and hopes I thought I had lost,  
 Like a Rebirth of artistry and poetic purpose,  
 Reunifying passion of free verse and rhymes,  
 Revitalizing my want to live,  
 Rehearsing my reasons to continue,  
 Forged and Reconstructed by the pages of the Harlem Renaissance,  
 Reaching from New York all the way to North Carolina,  
 I was Resuscitated mouth to mouth by the breath of shelves and libraries,  
 Shaping and Molding and Reinforcing the Renaissance of me.



- Reginald Wilson, MS, MSW, LCSW



# Welcoming Our New Staff

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## **Jamilah Silver, PhD, Postdoctoral Staff Psychologist**



Jamilah Silver, PhD, earned her bachelor's degree in Education and Social Policy from Northwestern University and her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Stony Brook University. She completed her predoctoral internship at Brown University's Alpert Warren Medical School. Presently, she is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

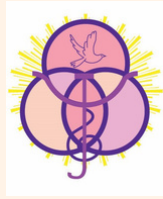
Dr. Silver specializes in supporting young children, adolescents, and families through adversity, emotional and behavioral challenges, and developmental transitions. She has particular expertise in early childhood mental health, parent-child interventions (including parent management training), and psychological assessment. Her clinical approach is grounded in Evidence-Based Practice in Psychology, combining the best research evidence with clinical expertise and individual client needs, along with trauma-informed care and a strong commitment to serving diverse and underserved communities.

## **Brooklynn Clear, BS, Master's-Level Psychology Intern**



Brooklynn Clear, BS, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, lived in Marietta, Georgia throughout her time at grade school, and has lived in North Carolina since 2016. She has been able to meet and interact with many different people throughout her life, and believes that this helped develop her interest in psychology and human behavior.

Brooklynn started her journey in Psychology at Western Carolina University and earned two Bachelor of Science degrees in Psychology and Criminology. She is currently a master's student at North Carolina Central University, majoring in Clinical Psychology. Throughout her time at NCCU, she has found a special interest in the psychological assessment process and has also strengthened her research skills. Her current research is focused on interactions between psychology and consumerism, specifically when it comes to self-esteem. Brooklynn expects to graduate in the spring of 2026 and hopes to continue being involved in both psychological assessment and research on psychology and consumerism in the future.



# Welcoming Our New Staff

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## **Mustafa Oner, BA,**

### **Master's-Level Psychology Intern**



Mustafa Öner, BA, is a student majoring in the Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology program at North Carolina Central University. Originally from Turkey, he earned his bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mustafa has developed a strong foundation in clinical work through diverse roles in behavioral health, psychological research, and healthcare auditing. His responsibilities have included conducting behavioral observations, supporting diagnostic assessments, managing clinical data, and ensuring the integrity of healthcare service delivery across a range of systems.

Mustafa's clinical interests center on psychological and cognitive assessment, trauma-informed care, and the impact of sociocultural factors on mental health outcomes. He is especially committed to working with individuals from historically underserved populations and is passionate about providing accessible, affirming, and contextually-aware care. His approach emphasizes individualized support, clinical accuracy, and a deep respect for the lived experiences of those he serves.

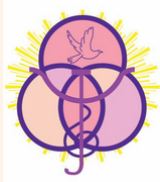
## **Kennedy Collins, BA, MA,**

### **Marketing Intern**



Kennedy Collins is from Chapel Hill, NC and presently serves as the marketing intern for the Armstrong Center for Hope. She earned her BA from Princeton University, concentrating in Race and Public Policy (African American Studies) with a certificate in Spanish Language and Culture. She recently graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a master's in Strategic Communication. Her course curriculum included interdisciplinary content in communications, marketing, journalism, public relations and business.

She has found strategic communication as a whole to be the purposeful, multilayered use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission and connect with stakeholders. In doing so, she is eager to help organizations maintain cohesion between their core identity, mission and values (their “why”) and their communication, especially in the ever-changing digital landscape, while communicating in a way that is suitable to distinct stakeholder groups. Her thesis explored the notion of authenticity in the digital age, with solutions for how organizations can both define and carry it out.



# ACFH Updates and Programs



## For Therapists

## For Clients

### Wednesdays at the Well

Launched in 2012, Wednesdays at the Well is a monthly virtual consultation group for therapists and trainees interested in integrating spirituality into mental health practice. The group meets virtually most 4th Wednesdays from 12:00 to 12:55 PM. Due to the holidays, our next conversation is December 10<sup>th</sup> with Dr. Stacey Pearson-Wharton, Dean of Health and Wellness & Director of the Counseling Center at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, PA. Dr. Pearson-Wharton's topic is "Healing Racism: Using Spiritual Principles for Recovery and Revival."

Request the session link and monthly notifications at [tarmstrong@armstrongcfh.com](mailto:tarmstrong@armstrongcfh.com)

### **New Therapy Groups in 2026!**

**Parent Management Training (\*Virtual\*)--Jamilah Silver, PhD**  
**Tuesdays at 5-6 pm, January 13th thru March 3rd \*Virtual**  
*Are you looking for effective strategies to navigate the challenges of parenting?* Parent Management Training (PMT) offers evidence-based techniques to help you build a more positive and harmonious home environment. Whether you're dealing with defiant behavior, sibling rivalry, or simply want to strengthen your connection with your child, PMT can provide the tools you need. PMT is beneficial for parents of children of all ages, from toddlers to teenagers.

**"Young Women Rising" (\*In-Person in Durham\*)**  
**--Melanie McIntyre, MS, LCMHC**

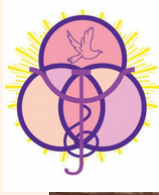
**Mondays from 7-8:30 pm, January 26th thru March 16th**  
This therapy group for female high schoolers is focused on developing and enhancing healthy coping, social, and emotional regulation skills in a safe, confidential space while fostering a sense of community and belonging among peers. Using a combination of psychoeducation, skill building, and discussion, group participants can lean into goal setting and empowerment for futures on the rise!

**"Men on the Battlefield" (\*Virtual\*)**  
**--Reginald Wilson Jr., MS, MSW, LCSW**

**Thursdays from 6 - 7:30 pm, January 22nd thru March 12th**  
This men's therapy group is a space for trust-building, truth-telling, vulnerability, and accountability in the midst life's war zones. These honest conversations will forge tools to protect men's mental and emotional health. These tools can build healthy habits and lifestyles, promote stability, and positively impact family, work environment, and community.

**Sign up here to register!**





# 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 through a Trauma-Informed lens. Psychoeducational and psychological testing (for autism, ADHD, LD, and other concerns) are available resources at the ACFH as well. We currently accept several insurance plans, including Aetna, BlueCross BlueShield, Cigna, Medicaid, and Medicare. We also offer sliding scale rates to fit almost any budget. In addition to daytime appointments, some evening and weekend appointments are available. Also, psychotherapy and some testing appointments can be held virtually in a secure telehealth environment.

## **Current Hours:**

Monday-Thursday, 8 am - 8 pm

Fridays, 8 am - 3 pm

## **Schedule an appointment today:**

Call: (919) 418-1718, ext. 204

Fax: (919) 794-5715

Email: [acfhinfo@armstrongcfh.com](mailto:acfhinfo@armstrongcfh.com)

## **Our Clinical Team**

Tonya D. Armstrong, PhD, MTS, LP, HSP-P  
Kristen V. Bell-Adair, Ph.D., LP, HSP-P  
Brooklyn Clear, BS, Intern  
Psiyina L. Davis, MACC, MA, LMFT  
Sherry C. Eaton, PhD, LP, HSP-P  
Allison M. Garner, MA, LCMHC  
Clifton D. Garner, Sr., PsyD, LCMHC  
Anthony F. Greene, PhD, LP, HSP-P  
Angela M. Hopkins, MA, MBA, MDiv, LCMHCA  
Asha Lockett, MA, Practicum Student  
Melanie A. McIntyre, MA, LCMHC  
Melanie Melton, MA, MDiv, LMFT,  
Chanda Mitchell, MSW, LCSWA  
Princess Mitchell, MC LCMHCA  
Kim Nichols, MA, LMFT  
Mustafa Oner, BA, Intern  
Vicki Pinson, MA, LPA  
Jamilah Silver, PhD  
Milicia Tedder, PhD, LPA  
Reggie Wilson, MS, MSW, LCSW

## **Our Administrative Team**

Vanessa Acebedo, MS, Billing Coordinator  
Tyrell Baggett, MBA, CCMA, Office Administrator  
Aces Bularon, BS, Billing Manager  
Wendy Cavalieri, AA, Practice Manager  
Regelyn "Kaye" Emperado, BS, Front Office Support  
Nancy Serrano-Ayala, BA, Client Access Representative  
Maria Vinuya, BS, Scheduler

## **Business Addresses:**

1502 West NC Highway 54, Suite 403  
Durham, NC 27707

805 Spring Forest Road, Suite 800  
Raleigh, NC 27609



# A Word From Our Founder and CEO

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I am probably speaking for most of us when I say that these are the scariest times of our existence. Growing up in Durham, I heard about “Hoover Days,” so called due to the Great Depression that began during President Herbert Hoover’s term. I’ve watched the gritty images of my ancestors coming through Jim Crow, with fire hoses, vicious dogs, and Bloody Sunday attacks that questioned our very humanity. Many of us lived through the 9/11 attacks, the murder of Trayvon Martin, and the utter devastation of COVID-19. Climate change is displayed through devastation across the land by drought, fire, hurricanes, and flooding. We’ve survived all this and much more, but can we really keep on going?



**Tonya D. Armstrong,  
PhD, MTS, LP, HSP-P**

Will we be able to afford the necessities of life, let alone get ahead and ambitiously pursue our purpose? Can we and our loved ones find affordable housing and food, jobs that sustain our whole selves, medications that don’t bankrupt us? Will we be safe from the dangers that lurk, from our very homes to the other side of the world? Is there any hope left?

While there is indeed much uncertainty ahead, the truth that keeps me grounded is that our lives are in all-knowing, all-powerful, ever present, and trustworthy hands. Granted, these days it doesn’t look like any of these things are true. Growing our faith is a spiritual leap, but it is also built on our knowledge of history, that is, the history of our families, our communities, our country, and the human race. This isn’t the first time we have faced threats of internal and external destruction. To quote Tye Tribbett, “If [God] did it before, [God] will do it again--yeah!” In simple terms, resilience means that we go through hard things, but eventually bounce back. Adversity is a required ingredient of resilience, and also the very thing that is overcome. To fully blossom, we are called to display resilience in our bodies, our minds, our souls, and our spirits. We learn through the journey that job loss, foreclosure, overwhelming grief, the cancer diagnosis, estranged family members, and yes, symptoms revealing that we are mentally unwell are all temporary conditions. As we dig even deeper into our spiritual resources, we can find the wisdom, support, and hope that we need to be stronger, more compassionate, and more generous than we ever were before.

*How can your own spiritual practices help you maintain your peace and perspective in the midst of life’s storms? Just start with one...*

