



Living

IMMEASURABLY MORE NEWSLETTER



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 LIM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

LIM awards four scholarships annually ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500, to graduating high school seniors. The four scholarships are awarded based on academics, need, service and leadership, separately. These scholarship programs have provided young scholars with both educational and professional opportunities. Since 2020, LIM has provided a total of \$59,517.00 in scholarship funds to twenty recipients. Several of the recipients have joined both LIVE and LIM as interns. Congrats to our 2023 Scholarship Recipients!



Thank You

TO ALL OUR *Volunteers*

Thank you to everyone one who joined us for our Spring Homeless Initiative! We couldn't do it without you. Interested in being a volunteer? Head over to the website for more information!



Live LANE



LIVE won 2nd place in the 2023 NCMA Golf Tournament for the women division! Way to go LIVE!



Our CEO believes in health and wellness and understands the importance of keeping both the mind and body sharp. She runs a 5k each month, if interested in joining her on a run, please contact her directly at cflaming@invigorateliving.com.

Kudos KORNER

Thank you to **Tammy Otorbor (CDC)** and **Ruby Reeves (DOE)**

for going above and beyond daily in their roles! Way to go Team!

Thank you for going above & beyond.

THE LIM SPOTLIGHT

This quarter LIM spotlights *Families First*. For 130 years, Families First has been providing empowering solutions for Atlanta's most vulnerable population. In 1890, Families First started as an orphanage on the Westside of the city on what is now the Spelman College campus. In 1937, we went on to become the first licensed adoption agency in the state of Georgia. In 1964, we opened the first group home (now called cooperatives) for young people in the state, and in 1989 we developed a curriculum that more than 200 communities across the country use to help divorcing parents learn how to co-parent their children. Now, we are committed to setting up youth for success by young adulthood by providing them with key services to overcome life's challenges and reach their goals.

Families First

We recognize the cycles of poverty are not broken by one program or service alone so we offer a combination of services and supports build resilient families and ensure foster and underserved youth are successful and independent by young adulthood. Through our collaborations with community partners, virtual services, and locations throughout the state of Georgia, Families First is able to impact youth and families by providing counseling services, health and wellness education for pregnant teens, early childhood education, life skills for youth in foster care, parenting classes, supportive housing, adoption facilitation and placement, and so much more. For more information on how you can get involved visit their website at <https://familiesfirst.org/>

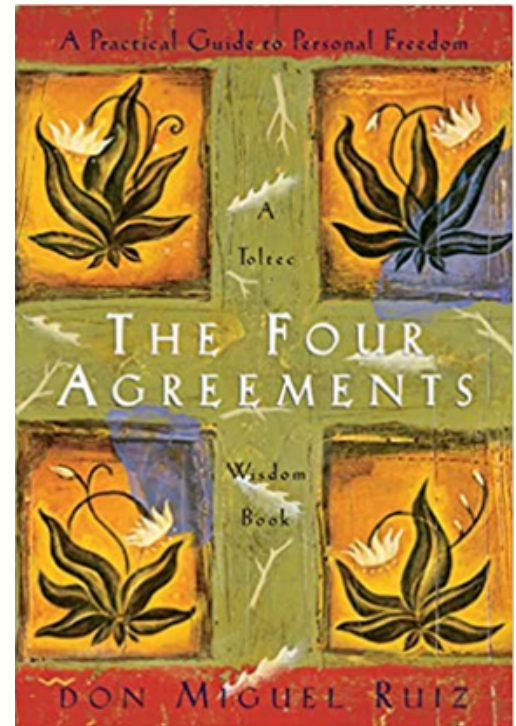


info@familiesfirst.org

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

WHAT'S ON YOUR SHELF?



In **The Four Agreements**, bestselling author don Miguel Ruiz reveals the source of self-limiting beliefs that rob us of joy and create needless suffering. Based on ancient Toltec wisdom, The Four Agreements offer a powerful code of conduct that can rapidly transform our lives to a new experience of freedom, true happiness, and love. First published in 1997, The Four Agreements has since sold over nine million copies in the United States and seven million worldwide. It has been translated into 46 languages, appeared on the New York Times bestseller for nearly ten years, and was the 36th bestselling book of the decade. Don Miguel is also the author of The Mastery of Love, The Voice of Knowledge, Prayers, and the New York Times bestseller, The Fifth Agreement, a collaboration with his son, don José Ruiz. Each of his books are international bestsellers.



"you don't have to be positive all the time. It's perfectly okay to feel sad, angry, annoyed, frustrated, scared and anxious. Having feelings doesn't make you a negative person. It makes you human.

Lori Deschene

If you or someone you know is dealing with mental health issues, please refer to the below resources.

[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
Call or text [988](#) or chat [988lifeline.org](#).

[SAMHSA's National Helpline](#)
[1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](#)
Text your zip code to: 435748 (HELP4U)

[Disaster Distress Helpline](#)
[1-800-985-5990](#)

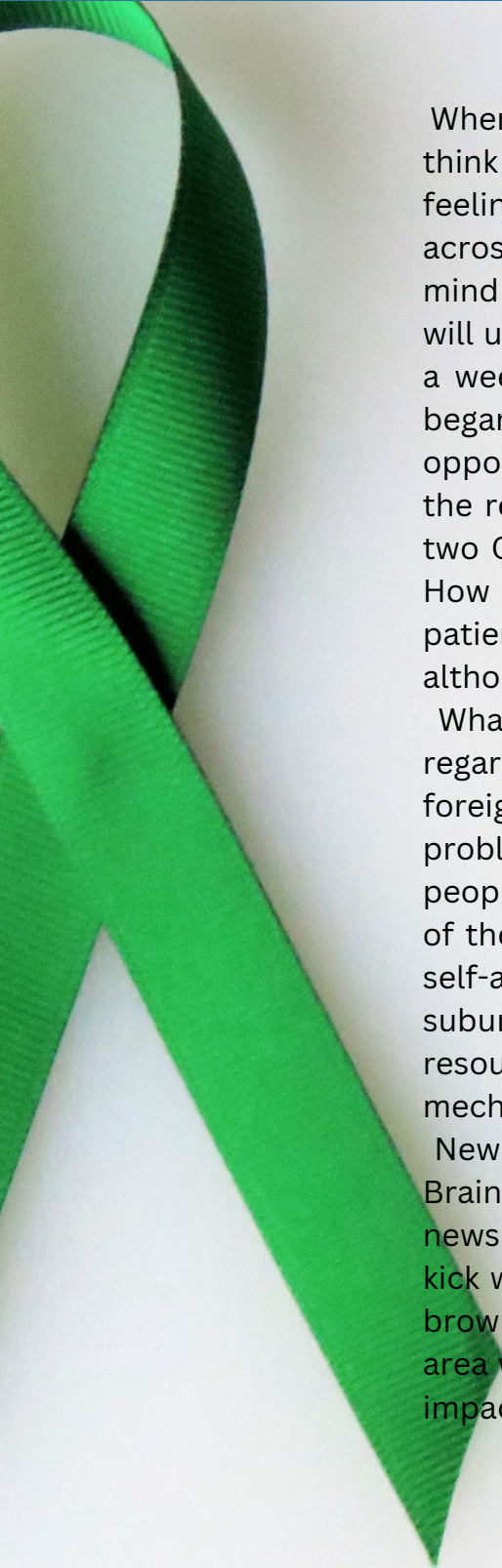
[Veterans Crisis Line](#)
Dial [988](#) then press 1
Text: 838255

Georgia Substance Use Agency and Mental Health Agency

- Georgia Dept of Behavioral Health and IDD (2 Peachtree Street, NW 24th Floor Atlanta, GA 30303-3171)
- Phone Number: [\(404\) 657-2252](#)
- Fax Number: (404) 657-6417
- <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov>
- [OTP Directory \(samhsa.gov\)](#) contains a list of Opiate Treatment Programs in all 50 states

For more mental health resources visit www.samhsa.gov or www.mentalhealthfirstaid.com

MORE THAN JUST TALKING



When most people think of traditional therapy in the Western world, they think of a person laying on a couch or sitting up sharing their thoughts and feelings to a stranger who has been trained to listen and record notes across as the person on the couch talks. That is what was imprinted in my mind before I considered a profession in therapy and counseling (note: I will use these two words interchangeably). However, what I experience on a weekly basis in the 21st century is far removed from this image that began in the 19th century with psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud) and an opportunity for only the wealthy at its inception. I want to share some of the realities of being a mental health counselor practicing in one of only two Opiate Treatment clinics in a small, urban town here in New Mexico. How does it look working with an entire caseload of substance abuse patients? It is quite in contrast to what Freud and his colleagues began although his theories and others are still practiced around the world.

What I know now is that therapy is more than just talking in a room regardless of what type of clients. Talk therapy for most of my patients is a foreign concept to them who may prefer action over verbalizing their problems each week and month to a stranger. Counseling in a town where people struggle taking efforts each day to simply manage the basic needs of their lives; lacking the resources that they need in order to thrive and self-actualize is an enormous challenge than if I was doing counseling in a suburban, middle-upper class community. The former lack access to resources, the latter has access to resources and their own healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with life's challenges.

New York Times columnist, Maia Szalavitz, and author of *The Unbroken Brain* (MacMillan, 2016) wrote in a 2016 article in *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, on America's addiction epidemic, "Addictions are harder to kick when you're poor." She explores how difficult it is for poor black and brown people to quit when they are already down. I live and work in an area where I witness the truth of what she is saying every day and see the impact of the opioid epidemic and trauma upon poor families.

They live and feel trapped in their drug addictions, dysfunctional, abusive relationships, legal, health problems, employment problems, grief, suicide ideations, and past trauma histories of abuses (domestic, sexual, physical, and emotional). Sitting in a room and talking about their problems is in sharp contrast to the actions they have to take to meet their survival needs.

Other clients may prefer Art therapy over Talk therapy because it is a better way for them to express themselves beyond words. I am not an art therapist nor use art but I am aware of its effectiveness in working with clients. I have attempted in the past, but I found art therapy training with more office space was needed. I have used, like some non-Art therapists I know, coloring books and worksheets to address the art needs of clients who did not prefer Talk Therapy.

Then the question begs: what do I do then, as a licensed mental health counselor in a poor, small town at a clinic that provides prescribed opioid medication to treat substance abuse problems?

I spend most of my time listening to all those problems (presented earlier) and more. Many of my clients have been pre-diagnosed by other mental health professionals whom I coordinate a client's care with through prescription monitoring programs (if they are taking psych meds) or phone meetings if there are problems that need to be addressed. Knowing client's trauma-based, co-occurring disorders such as Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar Disorders, and their symptoms has clarified individual problems, family dynamics, the impact of trauma and environmental forces upon an individual and their families.



Together, I use my listening skills, empathy, life experiences, understanding of mental health diagnoses, coping skills, and use of prescribed opiates (Methadone and Suboxone), its criteria as all part of treating my clients.

Many of my clients are unemployed, and others have jobs as manual laborers, project managers (in nearby towns like Los Alamos) or self-employed as auto mechanics. Those clients who are employed make efforts each day to keep their jobs as they juggle getting help for their addiction. Other patients who have serious legal problems, lack family support, employment, and motivation are faced with a greater risk of overdosing due to the severe impact of chemical dependencies and survival issues.

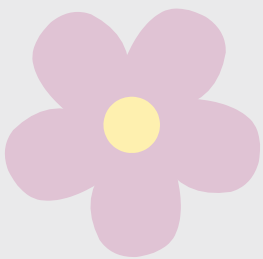
MORE THAN JUST TALKING

I see my work as simply providing guidance, support, and tools for clients. Part of that work is listening, as mentioned before, and the other parts are being a resource, providing referrals, resources, current drug knowledge information, asking solution-focused questions, and affirming a client's strengths and abilities. I believe because most people have this belief that therapy is about talking about their problems, the resistance to counseling is stronger in people that do. However, if I build up enough trust with a client, the potential for positive outcomes become greater and a client who does not like counseling, previously, begins to discover there is an aspect of it he/she does accept.

Mental health counseling is not just for people with problems or a mental health diagnosis. Most people strive to become better at who they are and what they do and how they get there will be different. Some people find comfort in being able to express themselves in a private setting with someone whom they trust while some people disagree with the mental health professions altogether. They have heard and know its potential for abuse and harm and prefer cultivating their own kind of self-therapy. I understand and have met counselors whose clients lost respect for them because of their poor counseling ethics.

The future of mental health counseling is here with telehealth counseling (audio & visual) and other expressionistic counseling (dancing, singing, art, gardening, etc). Though I use phone counseling in my work, it presents its own sets of challenges, limitations, and ethical dilemmas. However, the goal and spirit of mental health counseling is the same no matter what changes in technology: supporting a person in creating a healthy well-being of body, mind, and soul, reaching their personal goals; discovering their own answers; doing no harm in the process; and listening to them, patiently, when they believe nobody else in the world will.

Maurice Fleming, LMHC



WHAT'S
NEXT??

LIM WOMEN'S RETREAT
July 27-30

Interested women between the ages of
18-35 that would like to attend, please
apply here by May 31st.

APPLY

