

The Phoenix

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Office Closures

Please be aware that the offices will be closed for the following holidays:

December 24
Christmas Eve
Closes at Noon

December 25
Christmas Day
Closed all day

January 1
New Year's Day
Closed all day

In the event of inclement weather, our offices follow the delay/closure policy for Mid-Del Public Schools.



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Your Mini Survival Guide to Navigating the Holidays

by Albert Rios, MA, LADC/MH

As we inch closer and closer to the end of the year, we find several changes happening around us. Changes that are beyond our control can be very terrifying.

If you haven't noticed, it is starting to get offensively colder and darker sooner, thanks daylight savings! In all honesty this is the time many people begin to prepare for major family celebrations, feasts, and family arguments; but for some, this part of the year becomes harder. It's like falling into a bottomless dark pit with no sign of ever stopping. To some that's a bit extreme but for others it's reality.

When preparing for the winter, there are a few tips to keep in mind in order to make it a bit more tolerable.

Friendsgiving and Friendsmas are totally perfect substitutes. There is so much hype around family and traditions, but it is very important to remember that family is with whom you identify. The saying blood is thicker than water does not always fit every family. Sometimes our family is very dysfunctional. And it is ok to say no.

Toxic families need healthy space and boundaries. If you want to pass on the holidays, that is perfectly ok too. Sometimes it is much nicer to spend a quiet low-key holiday where you partake in self-care. We all know that there are those family members who you cannot stand and don't really want to be around at all. Bottom line, saying no is self-care; plus, you can always order food from a number of apps.

Depression feels like a giant monkey on your back that comes out in full force around the holidays. During the colder and darker times, our bodies do not get enough vitamin D which promotes brain function. It has also been discovered that the vitamin D receptors are in the same area of the brain associated with depression. Many times, this is the case once Fall and Winter arrive. Several people deal with SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder).

Anxiety often comes out for the holidays to stir up some trouble. Between the stressors of family, shopping, spending money, etc., it usually occurs with depression. If gone unaddressed, the two can really take the driver's seat. Therefore, it is very important to check in with our friends, see how they are doing, see what

they need, or just be an ear for them to vent. The importance of having a nonjudgmental venting buddy is immeasurable and will help improve your mental health. It reminds you that you are not alone, allowing you to share feelings and thoughts that may seem small to others but important to you. Your vent buddy may even offer a fresh perspective, but always make sure to ask your friend if they are ok with you venting.

Checking on your friends is important; not just because we all need to be checked on, but because many times our strong friends are the most quiet. They are the ones who put on a smile for work, the ones who crack jokes, the ones who are emotionally distant. A simple text or a call communicates love on so many levels. Pretty simple right?

When you feel the anxiety starting to take over remember to turn to your meditations or grounding techniques. These are the quickest ways to try and bring yourself to a safe place. There are several YouTube videos and apps that offer several meditations you can bookmark for your "go-to."

Grounding techniques are about hyper focusing on your surroundings and keeping yourself in the moment. One of my favorites is starting with closing your eyes and identifying 5 things you see, then identifying 4 things you hear, then 3 things you touch,

2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste.

Final tip, make sure to get adequate rest, hydration, nutrition, and at least 30 minutes of exercise a day. All of these are examples of self-care. It does not always require money

when you talk about self-care. Free is just as effective! This obviously sounds like common sense but practicing and preaching don't always happen. The holidays seem glamorous but can be very draining and exhausting. Be kind to each other.



You Are Beautiful

by Rob Burgess

I hear of your struggles...
The pains of the present
The pains of the past
And cry for you...
And pray:

May you know of your beauty –
Unique and special
Made in the image of the Creator – God
The One who loves you deeply –
Who knows you;

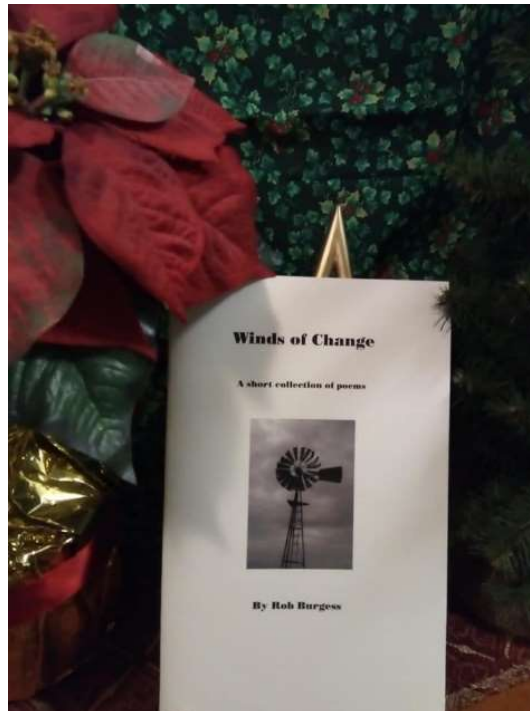
May you know love –
Freedom from bigotry
From slurs and condemning stares,
From ignorance and hate;

May you know freedom –
From fear of abuse and beatings,
From violence and death –
To be secure;

May you know justice –
From discrimination of losing home and job,
To be accepted and valued –
You are worthy;

May you have courage –
To be the person you are created to be
With all of its challenges
With all of its changes –
To be you;

I hear of your struggles and say:
You are precious
You are human
You are beauty.



"Winds of Change" is a poetry chapbook of 28 poems.
It is available for \$10 (add \$1 for postage).
Contact redrob2013@yahoo.com to purchase.

Cleaning Supplies Drive

In the last several months, we have had numerous requests from clients who have not been able to afford cleaning supplies. If you would like to help, please bring your donations by the office during the month of December.

Urine Testing & Administrative Office Hours

Mondays – Thursdays
9:30am – 6:00pm

Fridays
10:30am – 6:00pm

Weekends by appointment

Overflow or Just Over It

by Cody Shoemaker, MSC, NCGC-2, LADC/MH

Have you ever wondered why people come into your life? Some of them are there on a regular basis. Others are only there for a short time. You develop intimate relationships with some, while others are from a distance.

Over the last 6 months or so, I have had the privilege of gaining insight from someone new in my life. Suffragan Bishop Dr. Vanuel Charles Little, Jr. pastors a church in Oklahoma City called Greater First Deliverance Temple. During the last year, he has repeatedly told his congregation that 2019 is the year of "Living in the Overflow."

I have to say that I have thought about this on more than one occasion. Some of my friends and family have had a great 2019. Mine...well, not so great. Or at least it seemed that way at times. I looked at photos on social media and thought about what I could have had this year. It has been discouraging at times. Some people purchased brand new cars. I'm driving a 2005 model. Some people are new homeowners. I rent. Some people have jobs that pay 6 figures. Mine does too; it is just that most of the 0's are after the decimal point. I looked at vacation pics and couldn't remember when the last time I had a day off work that I didn't do anything job related.

I could go on and on, but I think you get the point. I have a good friend who years ago was struggling with some personal things in her life. She called me and we got together to talk. She innocently said that she really enjoyed talking to me because I always made her feel better. My life was "so much worse" than hers. We laughed. Then she felt bad. But there seemed to be some truth in it.

When we compare our lives to others, we will never match up. Someone must have the better life. Or at least that is what we seem to think.

I have met with clients who struggle with gambling, substance use, pornography addiction, family problems, etc. They believe that their struggles are mountainous and will never be conquered. And then they begin to work diligently on them. They come to some sort of resolve. It may not be exactly what they expected; but there is peace.

If I am honest, 2019 has been one of the most difficult years I have ever had. Some of you are nodding your head in agreement right now. I have thought about the word "overflow" and wondered where mine was. Then it hit me. I am in overflow. I have an overflow of bills, problems, health issues, etc. While those things have obviously been true, I also have other areas of overflow that I have not always been willing to acknowledge.

There have been wonderful times this year that I have spent with family and friends. I have

developed closer relationships with the people I care about. I became an uncle. I ate some amazing food. I resolved some issues of my own. I learned to lay down some burdens. I even planted seeds of peace. In my most difficult days I exhibited mercy and grace.

There are days that I wanted to give up. I quit my job 73 times in one day; but still managed to go back to work the next day. I personally believe it is all about perspective. I can choose to focus on all the negativity, stress, chaos, etc. in my life or I can choose to rise above it. I can experience joy, peace, love, etc. We all make a choice each day. Do I desire to live in "the land of lack?" Or do I want to live in "the overflow?" It is rarely if ever easy. But I choose something better. I desire to be a better person than I was yesterday.

What about you? What is your choice? What do you hope to gain? What has 2019 taught you? If you search, you may just agree that the Bishop was right. Overflow may not have come like you pictured it, but it has been present.

Congratulations!

The following staff members are celebrating birthdays in the month of December.

Delmon Boone 12/6
Shanae Stoner 12/12
Star Young 12/13
Shelley Evans 12/28



We would like to congratulate Star Young who became a certified ADSAC Assessor!



Please help us congratulate Bobbie Hill on receiving her Masters Degree in Addictions Counseling and Sara George on receiving her Bachelors Degree in Sociology and Substance Abuse Studies! Both are graduates of the University of Central Oklahoma.



Please join us on
December 21 @ 6:00 pm for our 2nd Annual
End of Year Celebration and
Awards Ceremony



Feast Buffet
5735 SE 15th St.
Midwest City

Life Recovery Services will pay for staff
members and special guests (plus 1 guest).
Friends of the agency are invited to attend
for a cost of \$20.00 per ticket.



Professional Development

The following online trainings have been approved by the LADC and LPC/LMFT Boards for 2 Hours. Please contact Cody to enroll.

Managing Pain in Opioid Addicted Clients
December (Ongoing)
Life Recovery Services
\$30.00 / Free to Staff

Opioid Use in Pregnant Women
December (Ongoing)
Life Recovery Services
\$30.00 / Free to Staff

The Neurobiology of Opioids
December (Ongoing)
Life Recovery Services
\$30.00 / Free to Staff

Effective Treatment Approaches for Opioid Users
December (Ongoing)
Life Recovery Services
\$30.00 / Free to Staff

Upcoming Community Events

Please make plans to attend at least one of these events.

Junk Hippy
December 14 @ 9:00am-5:00pm
Heritage Place
2829 S. MacArthur | OKC
\$5.00

Family Game Night
December 19 @ 7:30am-9:30pm
The Station at Central Park
700 S. Broadway | Moore
Free

Opening Night
December 31 @ 7:00pm-12:00am
Bicentennial Park
500 Couch Dr. | OKC
\$10.00

Chocolate & Raspberry Trifle

Ingredients

- 1/2 c. brewed black coffee or mango juice
- 2 tubs refrigerated chocolate pudding
- 1 c. reduced-fat sour cream
- 2 c. heavy (whipping) cream
- 3 tbsp. confectioners' sugar
- 1 chocolate-marble loaf cake or pound cake (14 oz)
- 1 bar bittersweet chocolate
- 3 baskets red raspberries (reserve 8 berries for garnish)

Directions

Have ready a 3-qt trifle bowl or clear glass serving bowl (about 8-in. diam). Combine pudding and sour cream in a medium bowl. In a large bowl, beat cream and confectioners' sugar with mixer on high speed until stiff, billowy peaks form when beaters are lifted. Arrange half the cake slices in bottom of trifle bowl; drizzle with 1/2 the coffee or juice. Spread with 1/2 the pudding mixture; sprinkle with 1/3 the chocolate shavings. Top with 1/2 the raspberries, then 1/2 the whipped cream. Repeat layers (reserve remaining shavings for garnish). Cover bowl with plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 8 hours or up to 1 day. Sprinkle with remaining chocolate shavings; garnish with reserved berries.



Staff Spotlight

Kirsten Lee, CM II, LPC Candidate Care Coordinator

- Mother of 3 Sons
- Owner of Sweet-Lee Sensational Cake Decorating and Gift Basket Company
- Graduate of Casady High School, Baker University, University of Central Oklahoma, and Langston University
- Self-Published Author of *The Widow's Guide But Not for Widows Only*
- Trauma Focused CBT Specialization
- Favorite Restaurant is Cheddars



Current Schedule

Appointments are generally scheduled Monday through Friday from 9:30pm – 6:00pm. Early morning, evening, and weekend appointments are available upon request as staff schedules permit. No appointments are needed on Tuesdays from 9:30am – 4:30pm.

Mondays:

Anger Management	11:00am – 12:00pm
Coping Skills	12:00pm – 1:00pm
Parenting	1:00pm – 2:00pm

Tuesdays:

Domestic Violence	2:00pm – 2:00pm
Cognitive	3:30pm – 4:30pm
Substance Abuse	4:30pm – 5:30pm

Wednesdays:

Substance Abuse	1:00pm – 2:00pm
Cognitive	2:00pm – 3:00pm
Anger Management	3:00pm – 4:00pm
Recovery Support	4:00pm – 5:00pm

Thursdays:

Relapse Prevention (Men)	10:00am – 11:00am
Cognitive (Women)	10:00am – 11:00am
Relapse Prevention (Women)	11:00am – 12:00pm
Cognitive (Men)	11:00am – 12:00pm
Cognitive	4:00pm – 5:00pm
Substance Abuse	5:00pm – 6:00pm
Parenting	5:00pm – 6:00pm

Service Spotlight of the Month



Case Management is a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors, and evaluates the options and services required to meet the client's health and human service needs.

It is characterized by advocacy, communication, and resource management.

It promotes quality and cost-effective interventions and outcomes.

Participants gain access to needed community services including medical, social, educational, and other services.

Services Available

We currently offer individual, couples, family, and group sessions.

Our staff members provide trauma-informed services both in the office and in various confidential settings within the community.

We have staff who speak English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

We offer urine testing, ADSAC assessments, pre-marital counseling, and the co-parenting course for those getting a divorce.

Please call the office to schedule an appointment or visit us on Tuesdays from 9:30am – 3:30pm for walk-ins.