

# TSI LIVING

PUBLISHED FOR THE PERSONS SERVED, FAMILY MEMBERS, DONORS, STAFF, ADVOCATES & FRIENDS OF TSI

WINTER 2021

## Ward Off Winter Blues

By Lindsey Laverty



**O**n March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus a global pandemic. In response, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health urged people to avoid crowds, stay six feet apart, wear a mask, and wash hands in an effort to remain physically healthy.

Now months later, many are tired of both the restrictions and the stress that comes from living in a health crisis. Doctors are warning of “pandemic fatigue” or feeling exhausted, anxious, lonely, and sad due to the pandemic. This can be caused by stay-at-home orders that can be isolating or a general fear of oneself and one’s loved ones becoming ill.

During COVID-19, taking care of your physical and

mental wellbeing is essential to managing stress and maintaining physical health. This becomes more difficult in the winter season where the days get shorter, darker, and colder. Health problems can arise like the cold or flu as well as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a form of depression that occurs around the same time each year, usually in the winter months. SAD can impact appetite, energy levels, sleeping, and moods.

To ward off winter blues, it is important to monitor your thoughts, fatigue, and feelings. This might mean contacting your doctor if you are having SAD symptoms or if you are experiencing suicidal ideation. You can also call the 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **800-273-8255** for free and

confidential support. Or, you may decide that teletherapy, or meeting with a therapist over the phone or on video, is the best option for getting support at this time.

In order to maintain your physical health, you need to practice the advice from the CDC. Staying home more often, washing hands, and wearing a mask in public are critical steps to preventing the spread of the coronavirus. As temperatures cool down, it is time to get creative with exercising indoors, finding entertainment, and connecting socially with others while keeping a physical distance. Inside this issue are more ideas on how to manage your mental and physical health this season. ■



# FINDING FORTITUDE & COURAGE IN UNCERTAINTY

**L**et me begin by saying that I could not have more respect and appreciation for the selfless work that all employees of TSI have displayed during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. We began this pandemic, as all others, without a guidebook to provide us with answers. Despite this lack of knowledge, we forged forward and together as a team, and with the growing body of knowledge that came from the public health experts, we were able to create over twenty new protocols that have provided us with the guidance to keep our employees and persons served safe.

Paul Brunton stated that “every test successfully met is rewarded by some growth in intuitive knowledge, strengthening of character, or initiation into a higher consciousness.” TSI has been witnessing each of these processes every day. We have learned not only how to address COVID-19 in our practices, but

also how to function as an organization through a sustained period of crisis. We are proud to report that nearly 90% of our employees feel that the frequency, clarity and format of all COVID-19 communication has been either extremely or very effective.

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# 危機

Additionally, over 90% are confident that they have the right resources and information.

Now to speak of the individuals that we are serving. These months have created uncertainty, fear, anxiety, isolation, and coronavirus-related restrictions and changes.

We have witnessed many of our individuals display courageousness despite the fear; fortitude despite the uncertainty; and adherence to difficult restrictions despite the isolation.

TSI is privileged to be serving all our individuals! We are grateful that they have selflessly supported our agency-wide efforts to get through this crisis.

To write the word ‘crisis,’ the Chinese use two brush strokes; one brush stroke stands for danger, the other for opportunity. We are not through this crisis yet, but we will be in months to come. TSI will step back and look for these opportunities that arise. We will use what we learn to continuously improve our services to provide the highest quality of care to those that need us. ■



**Mary Anne  
Poutous**

*Have a very safe holiday season!*



# Persons Served Engagement Committee Kick-Off

by Michele Charmello

In November, the newly formed **TSI Persons Served Engagement Committee** met twice to discuss interesting and fun activities happening here at TSI. We know that with daylight savings time ending, the weather getting colder, and the threat of the coronavirus still looming, we are all experiencing feelings of gloominess. There is certainly a need to, as one staff person put it, "Get a break from blah."

For these reasons, CEO Mary Anne Poutous organized the TSI Person Served Engagement Committee. The first meeting took place on Monday, November 2, 2020 and was led by ID Director

Michele Charmello. The committee discussed current engagement activities and potential opportunities to share resources and information agency-wide. **We will be sending out monthly emails filled with ideas and activities beginning in December.**

As we enter the long, cold, winter months, we feel it is crucial for our TSI family to remain involved and occupied with enjoyable, leisure time activities. Our committee will work collaboratively with the TSI Activities & Events Committee and all the wonderful TSI staff to help support, spread the word, and recognize the activities happening each day at TSI. ■

## SHARE YOUR STORIES & SEND US IDEAS!

Do you have an idea you would like to see happening at TSI to engage our persons served? GREAT! Do you have pictures or a story about one of your successful activities? WONDERFUL! Send your ideas, photos, and/or stories to Michele at [mcharmello@transitalservices.org](mailto:mcharmello@transitalservices.org)

# FALL FESTIVITIES

**Despite COVID-19 safety restrictions, persons served at TSI were still able to participate in some fall festivities.**

Tell the TSI Persons Served Engagement Committee what you will be doing in the months ahead to bring a little light into our TSI community. We will do what we can to support you and help make our staff members' time at work more enjoyable while adding to the quality of life of our persons served. Email Michele at [mcharmello@transitionalservices.org](mailto:mcharmello@transitionalservices.org). ■





# STAY-A-T-HOME MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICES

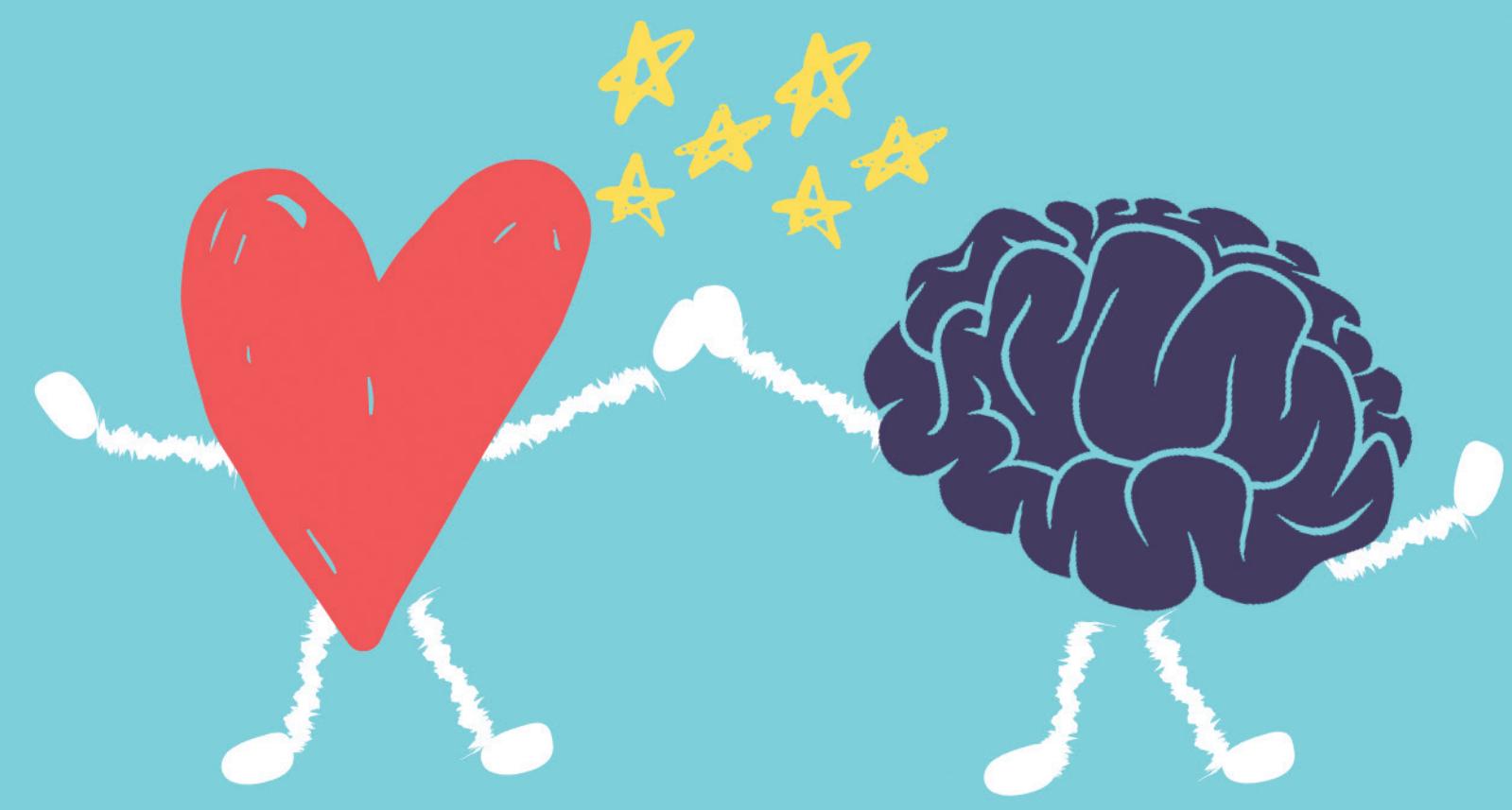
*by Johnnie Hicks*



The pandemic has made it mandatory for everyone to spend more time in their homes and that can mean more time with family or more time alone. With the shorter days and colder, winter weather, proactively and creatively managing one's fatigue, stress, and overall mental health is crucial at this time. Here are some stay-at-home mental health practices for this winter season:

- \* **MEDITATION/MINDFULNESS** – Both are proven to relieve stress and calm nerves. If you are new to meditation or mindfulness there are books and mobile apps available to help you start this journey and learn different techniques.
- \* **CREATIVE PROJECTS** – Taking on a new hobby—whether it is knitting, scrapbooking, painting, or cooking—is a great way to spend time indoors. Is there something you always wanted to learn to do? Now is the time! Purchase a how-to book or look up instructional videos on YouTube to get started.
- \* **SPIRITUAL PRACTICES** – There are a wide range of ways to unwind, and tapping into your spiritual self can be effective. This can include daily readings, prayer, services online or listening to





motivational and spiritual speakers on the internet, television, radio, or on a podcast. Choose to listen to uplifting sermons or speeches with words of encouragement.

\* **"MY SPACE"** – Create a room or a space designated just for you. You can personalize it with flowers, candles, artwork, and other elements that bring you peace. Visual and sensory stimulation can provide a positive distraction. When you feel overwhelmed, retreat to your space to just sit and be for a moment.

\* **JOURNALING** – Journaling is a good tool to monitor your mood and environment. Writing down feelings of fatigue or stress can help to explain what caused those feelings. Once documented, you can be more effective in the future in planning out mental health

practices. You can also use this time to reflect on what life is teaching you, or on goals you have for yourself in the new year.

\* **MENTAL EXERCISE** – Exercising your brain can take the form of puzzles or reading. Allow your mind a break from the anxiety and focus instead on a well-written story or putting together a puzzle.

\* **TEATIME** – Or it could be coffee or hot-chocolate time! Hot drinks are soothing, and tea in particular has been shown to have a variety of health benefits. While taking the time to drink a hot beverage, concentrate on relaxing your muscles, being in the moment, and take a mental inventory of how you are feeling that day. ■



# MOVE YOUR BODY

by Kellie Burnett



**RESEARCH SHOWS THAT EVERYDAY MOVEMENT HAS EXCELLENT PHYSICAL BENEFITS. REGULAR EXERCISE CAN RELIEVE STRESS, REDUCE WEIGHT, STRENGTHEN THE BODY, AND RELEASES ENDORPHINS THAT CAUSE FEELINGS OF HAPPINESS.**

Moving one's body also has mental benefits, as neuroscientist Wendy Suzuki has

discovered, physical activity directly impacts the brain and can improve mental focus and even decrease the chances of health conditions like depression.

Most people can agree that daily exercise is necessary for good health, but somehow fitness seems to stay on the “to do list” for many, and it can be difficult to get started or keep to a program. Some people excuse themselves from it by saying they do not

have the right equipment or by complaining that physical exercise takes up too much time; others may believe that exercise should be done outdoors.

These mindsets are preventing people from receiving the many health benefits of daily movement. Choose to boost your mood, release the stress, improve your focus, and get moving today! ■

## GET MOVIN'

\*Remember to consult with your doctor before attempting any new physical activity to make sure it is safe for you to do.

### YOGA

Adriene Mishler has been crowned the “Reigning Queen of Pandemic Yoga” by the New York Times. Her videos on YouTube are great for beginners and really anyone, featuring themes like “Yoga for Seniors” and “Yoga for Winter Blues.”

### MUSCLE-STRENGTHENING ACTIVITY

Set an alarm and choose exercises to complete for short repetitions. For example, do 10 jumping jacks, 10 push-ups, and 10 sit-ups.

### STRETCH BREAKS

During commercials or daily tasks, plan a break to fit movement into your day. This can be dusting, loading the dishwasher, taking out the trash, or cooking. Those steps add up!

### WALK AND TALK

When on the phone, walk around the room for the length of the call.

### DANCE PARTY

Music is a great way to let go, have fun, and move your body. Play your favorite song or find a playlist and then go for it. Get your family involved or celebrate by dancing about something good that happened to you that week.



# BE SAFE AND SOCIAL

*By Lindsey Laverty*

**H**umans are by nature social beings, and social interaction is a crucial part of a person's overall health. When persons experience social support, the quality of their mental and physical health increases.

At a time when staying socially distanced is required to stay safe, there are still opportunities to be social with others. Keeping in touch and spending time with friends and family may look different now, but making an effort is the only way to avoid isolation and loneliness while following health guidelines. ■

## SOCIALLY DISTANCED DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN SOCIAL ISOLATION

- ◆ **Schedule regular phone calls.** Pick a day of the week to catch up with a good friend or favorite family member. Talk about fun memories you have together, update each other on ways you are passing the time, and ask each other, "How are you, really?"
- ◆ **Bundle up and take a brisk walk.** Ask a neighbor or friend if they would be willing to take a walk with you on days that are not as bitter cold. Plan ahead and look at the weather, then wear layers, a mask, and find a place to walk away from crowds.
- ◆ **Attend an event digitally.** Local libraries are holding virtual book clubs and events, concerts have moved online, and so have comedy shows. Enjoy the feeling of being together with others while still being safe.
- ◆ **Play some games.** If you live with a roommate or with family, try playing some board or card games, or even doing a puzzle. If you live alone, play games on the computer or do video games while making friends online.
- ◆ **Find a Pen Pal.** Ask someone to be your pen pal! Agree to write letters to each other back and forth and write about topics that interest you both.
- ◆ **Consider fostering or adopting a pet.** Animals can be a source of comfort and can help us to feel less lonely. If you feel adopting is too much of a commitment or cost, think about fostering animals from your local shelter.

# STAFF RECOGNITION

# Celebrating Years of Service

## **30 YEARS**

KAREN PERRY

Community Support Specialist I

RENAY TROTTER

Director of Programs, Mental Health

## **20 YEARS**

BONIFACE IGBA

Community Support Specialist I

RONALD LANKEY

Director of Operations

JOHN LAVENDAR, JR.

Community Support Specialist I

## **10 YEARS**

JANET MOSES

Community Support Specialist I

JESSICA REICHARD

Community Support Specialist II

## **5 YEARS**

JOHNNIE HICKS

Mental Health Residential  
Services Coordinator

KRISTINE GORGEY

Administrative Secretary

## **3 YEARS**

LISA KNAPP

Community Support Specialist I

PATRICIA ROBINSON

Transition Age Youth Team Supervisor

CLIFFORD HOWARD

Community Support Specialist I

Mary Anne Poutous, Chief Executive Officer

TONISHA HOWARD

Community Support Specialist I

CHARITY WILEY

Community Support Specialist I



## RENAY TROTTER

### 30 Years – Director of Programs, Mental Health

Renay began her TSI career as a Resident Advisor. She is currently the Program Director for four mental health Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) programs, Congregate and Community Supportive Living, Permanent Supportive Housing and Transition Age Youth programs.

***"I enjoy helping people to change their lives. I see TSI providing programs to different populations in the future."***

## CHRISTINE HARTMAN

### 20 Years – Program Supervisor

Chris started her TSI career as the Senior Resident Advisor at one of our former Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) locations. She is currently the Supervisor of the Congregate Supportive Living and Community Supportive Living programs.

***"I work at TSI because I believe in the mission. I enjoy helping others and being a support for the staff who are so dedicated to providing quality services. I think there will always be a need for the services TSI provides. We truly go above and beyond what agencies (in our industry) have to offer."***



## MAUREEN KELLY

### 3 Years – Payroll/Human Resources Coordinator

Maureen began her TSI career as the Administrative Secretary. In her current role, she processes payroll and is responsible for various responsibilities of the Human Resources Department.

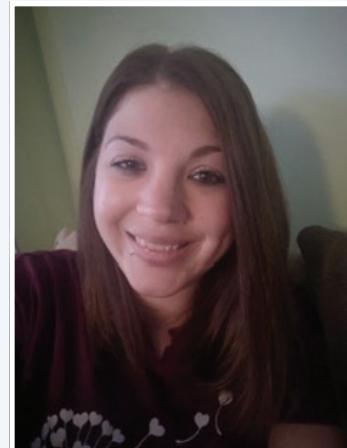
***"I like that TSI is a non-profit organization and has a meaningful mission and caring employees who are like my second family. I see TSI continuing to build relationships, foster hope, and change lives."***

## BRANDIE KONYAK

### 3 Years – Housing Support Staff

Brandie has been in her current position since being hired for the Permanent Supportive Housing Program.

***"What I like most about working for TSI is working with the persons served and making a difference in their lives by helping them obtain their apartments. I would like to see TSI grow in all departments."***



# Making a Difference

**TSI** recognizes staff monthly through our Making A Difference recognition program. Staff are nominated and voted by their peers for Making A Difference in the day-to-day lives of the individuals and their peers. At the end of the year, the committee selects the nominations that stood out the most. Thank you for your hard, heartfelt work and for the care and value you add to Transitional Services. Congratulations!

## KATHY D., MOSES, EBONI, DEBBIE, SHARON AND DENNIS

### CORE VALUES: Teamwork, Communication and Customer Service

This team exemplifies these qualities as they all do whatever it takes to keep individuals safe. The program was never without coverage and staff treated individuals with respect and dignity while providing options and personal communication.



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### MISSION STATEMENT

TO HELP PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES  
DISCOVER AND ACHIEVE THEIR HOPES  
AND DREAMS FOR A MEANINGFUL  
LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY.

### VISION STATEMENT

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE  
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PEOPLE WE SERVE.



Transitional Services, Inc. has been accredited by CARF for the following programs and services:

- Community Services: Community Housing
- Community Services: Supported Living
- Community Housing: Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Adults)
- Supported Living: Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Adults)

## LYNN AND KHALILAH

### CORE VALUE: Teamwork

Staff responded to an individual who was in crisis to ensure their safety. Support was quickly put into place. In addition, staff met the individual in the community and returned them to their program.

## WILL

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Be Servant-Hearted in Attitude and Actions

While performing a wellness check, Will discovered the individual was in need of immediate medical attention. Will contacted EMS and followed them to the hospital. He stayed with the individual until he was admitted and provided comfort through the process.

## A Glimpse Inside This Issue...

Stay Engaged!

Fall Fun

What To Do at Home

Get Movin'!

Safe Socializing

Years & Years

## TSI LIVING

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