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news CONNECTION

Kids' counselor shares passions, challenges

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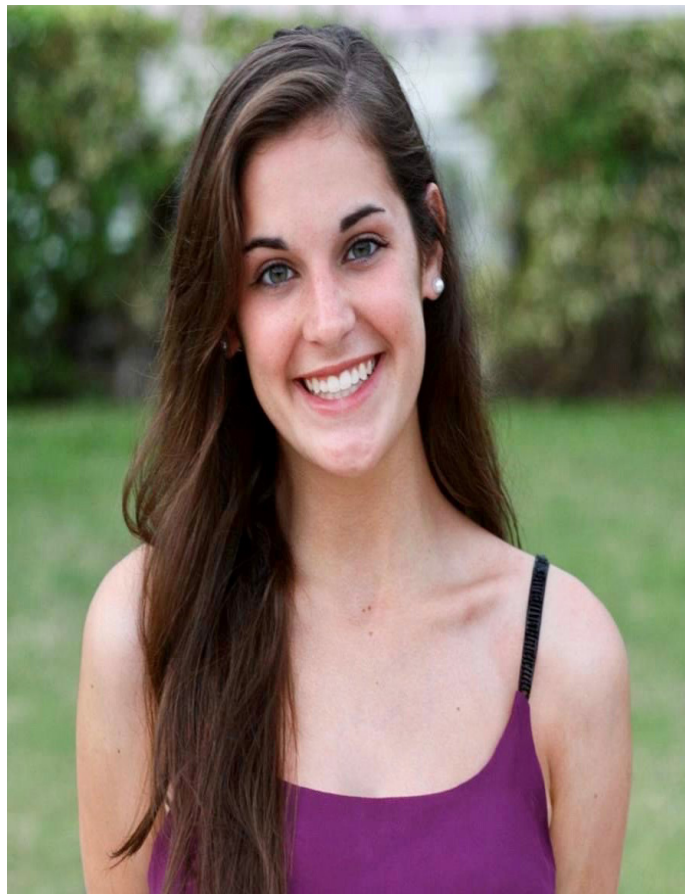
A Best Point Behavioral Health counselor and aspiring author has more than one story to share about her 3-year journey at The Children's Home.

"I first started in the summer of 2019 as a school-based therapist at both Taylor Elementary and Monfort Heights Elementary," Colleen Culley, behavioral health counselor, says. She said she's enjoyed her time here, and has grown through the experiences she's had during her tenure.

"I love working with The Children's Home," Culley says. "Because of my work, I'm equipped with the knowledge and experience to educate, so when I can, I try to do so."

Culley said this was her first job after completing graduate school, and she's grown as a professional while she's been here. "I was quickly surrounded by supportive people who helped me become the clinician I am," she said.

Culley may love her job, but she's not shy on letting everyone know just how difficult her job can be sometimes.



Behavioral Health Services Therapist Colleen Culley said she has grown during her time at The Children's Home and looks forward to building more relationships with future clients.

"The effect of this role personally isn't always easy. Sometimes you take home the bad – the abuse, the broken systems, the hospitalizations. But you also take home the good," she says. "I've had many people outside work question how an elementary aged child could 'really' suffer from a mental illness."



Behavioral Health Services Therapist Colleen Culley says using coloring pages and books can help a child “open up” because it helps decrease fidgeting and distraction.

While reminiscing, she remembers a couple of stories that really stand out to her. “I met with this client and her father for the initial diagnostic assessment. I always provide coloring sheets or toys of some kind the child can play with for the times they may not be contributing and because it can be easier for them to open up while they are fidgeting with a given object, decreasing the expectation for eye contact or the like,” Culley says.

This client was working on a coloring page throughout the assessment.

“When she finished she wrote ‘thank you’ on the top, drew a smiley face, and handed it to me. She thanked me for allowing her to share what had happened and for making her comfortable enough to do so,” said Culley.

Throughout the course of the child’s treatment, Culley says that she worked very hard and was able to successfully graduate her treatment program.

Even though Culley’s student has graduated, the client still stops by sometimes to let her know just how grateful she is for the help that Culley provided.

Culley has several stories about her time here at The Children’s Home that she could share, but she would rather remember them all in different ways. “I think what I will take with me forever, more so than one particular story, is the culmination of all the stories,” Culley says. “I save the notes and pictures from clients and families that remind me that progress and healing are real, and this work matters well beyond the session walls.”

Culley says she takes pride in her clients and their success stories, but one thing she wants everyone to take away from their time with her is that mental health is important. “When you struggle with mental health it is easy to believe there is no way out. But there is,” Culley says. “There’s so much more out there that you’ve yet to see, do, experience, and love. That is what I hope everyone takes with them.”



Behavioral Health Services Therapist Colleen Culley has clients that continue to be a part of her life and touch her in many ways. She keeps notes and pictures from clients and families to help remind her that the work she does with The Children’s Home matters and impacts people. She recently released her own children’s book titled, “Do You Know How Important You Are?” and can be purchased on Amazon.