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MEET: TRUE NORTH PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, LLC

MAR 8, 2023

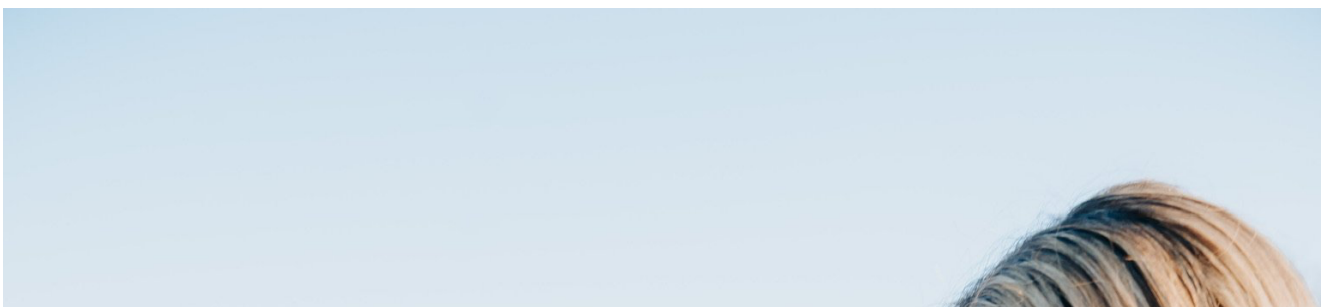


We wanted to welcome Jennifer Kaufman Walker of True North Psychological Services, LLC (<https://tnpsnova.com/about/>) to The Scout Guide Hunt Country! She will be joining us for Volume 11, and we couldn't be happier to have her and her mental health expertise within the pages of the Guide and as a part of this Hunt Country community.

We caught up with Jennifer, a Licensed Counselor in Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland, West Virginia and Florida to talk about her career path, her role at True North and her life here in Hunt Country!

TSG: How did you get started in your business?

JENNIFER: I realized that I wanted to advocate for people after facing my own struggles with Dyslexia and ADHD along with experiencing panic attacks while in high school. I had difficulty with testing, recall, and comprehension through school and once I failed my 9th grade year, my parents had me evaluated for learning disabilities. I remember the moment I was told that I had Dyslexia and ADHD. The relief I felt! There was a name for what I had been dealing with and my difficulties in school were not because I was not smart enough. I just learned differently than others. From that moment on, with tutoring, counseling, an IEP, etc., I was able to excel in school. However, not everyone believed in me. I had one teacher tell me that I "wasn't college material." That comment turned out to be an instrumental moment for me. I decided to go all the way and get my doctorate. I have to admit, it was not easy for me. I had to fight my way through, but I never gave up. The day I defended my dissertation was one of my biggest achievements to date. Not because I was now a doctor, although I was proud of that as well, but because I showed perseverance and grit and I believed in myself even when others doubted me (which is hard to do at times). I remember thinking, I have proved them all wrong and I was beyond proud of myself (I even wrote an acknowledgment to that teacher in my published research as a doctor! "Lastly, to the ones who said that I wasn't "college material." For the past 19 years I have been contemplating the best way to respond to you, so here it is. Thank you for your doubts as they pushed me towards this very moment.")





And, now onto how my experiences turned into my private practice, True North Psychological Services, LLC: I never thought that I would own a private practice. I recall thinking that the “real” difference would be made in working in the crisis realm of the mental health field. I will be the first to admit, I was wrong. From the start of undergrad at University of Lynchburg, I worked as a Victim Advocate for Victims of Sexual Assault and as a crisis worker for the Crisis Line of Central Virginia. Next, during my Masters program at Marymount University, I interned for Arlington Artworks as an Art Therapist, Community Residences as a Counseling Intern, and at the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute as a Social Work intern. While in my Doctorate program I provided Competency and Capacity evaluations, along with group and individual therapy and restoration services, for inmates at the Arlington County Jail. I also

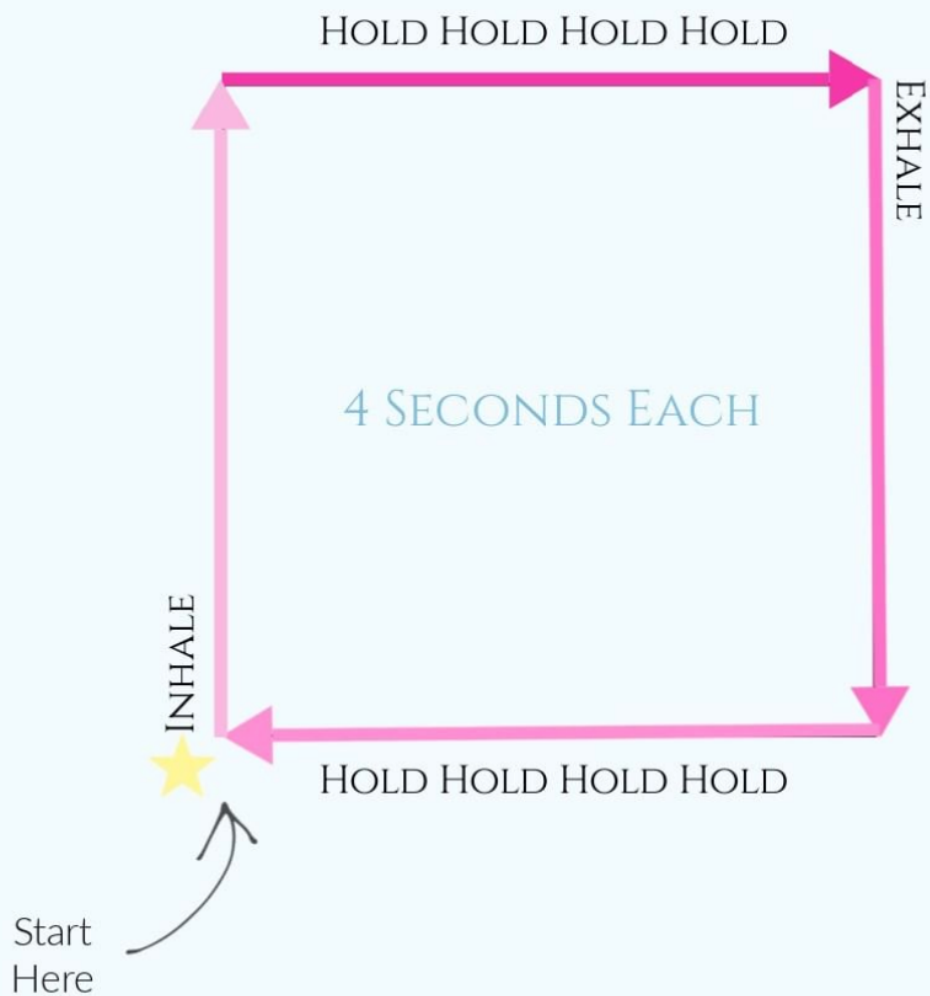
volunteered for the domestic violence shelter for about eight years. As I said earlier, I planned to work in crisis-related counseling until I saw the same individuals coming through the hospital and the jail over and over again. I realized that I could work with people proactively, in a private setting, instead of reactively in a community-run setting. I could help keep people out of the system instead of trying to get them out once they were already in. The catch was that I had to ensure that my services were affordable and available to everyone.

I started my business after I graduated with my PhD, from The George Washington University, (while pregnant with my son and my daughter was a little over a year- not sure what I was thinking ;)) and during the height of the pandemic. I knew that people needed support more than ever and wanted to make it accessible, so I decided to begin my own private practice. My mission was, and continues to be, returning potential and actual client calls within 24 hours (although I usually return messages within a few hours tops) and never turn anyone away due to financial constraints. We offer a "name your price" sliding scale. Whatever someone is able to afford, we will honor no questions asked, to ensure that they not only receive quality care, but they can do so without the added financial stress.

TSG: What do you love most about working in Hunt Country?

JENNIFER: The people. They are kind, welcoming, and know how to have a good time! The sense of community is something important to me especially when raising children.

BOX BREATHING



TRUE NORTH PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, LLC

THE GOALS OF HEALING



We develop maladaptive coping skills due to needing to protect ourselves at some point in our lives.



The goal of healing ourselves is not to get rid of those maladaptive coping skills



Healing is developing, finding, and adding healthier coping skills to our jar. By doing this, we need the maladaptive coping skills less and less.

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THE 54321 CALM DOWN TECHNIQUE

5

List 5 Things You Can SEE



4

List 4 Things You Can FEEL



3

List 3 Things You Can HEAR



2

List 2 Things You Can SMELL



1

List 1 Thing You Can TASTE





Above: We love these creative and eye-catching info-graphics that True North Psychological Services, LLC creates! Be sure to follow them on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/mytherapisttnps/>) to see more of these wonderful reminders and concepts.

TSG: What is your favorite aspect of your work?

JENNIFER: I love what I do. All of it. But my very favorite part is when clients, years later, reach out to tell me how they are doing. There is nothing better than knowing that someone who was really struggling is now achieving things they never imagined would be possible.

TSG: What are some of your favorite local spots in Hunt Country?

JENNIFER: I have so many favorites that I can not possibly name them all! A few are: Middleburg Massage Therapy, The Fun Shop (where I end up spending way too much money), Jenny's Salon (you can not go wrong with any of their stylists), The Elysium Axe Bar (so much fun), Another Turn Tack, Sweet Rose Bakery (they have made all of my children's birthday cakes), Purcellville EATS (they make an amazing Grilled Cheese), The Lucky Knot (love their clothing and the owners), Dirt Farm Brewery (they have BINGO!), Enhanced Beauty and Wellness (Amanda is wonderful), Creme De La Creme and The Town Duck (I want everything in these stores), May Aesthetics (one stop shop), Kelly Gaitten (one of the best realtors I have ever worked with), Ashanti Aesthetics Medicine, Virginia Regenerative Medicine & Spa (trustworthy and talented), Ridgeside K9 Dog Training (they are true dog whisperers), Jordan Equine (Dr. Jordan is one of the best veterinarians I have worked with) and Robyn Anderson Equestrian Trainer (Intuitive and talented)!

TSG: What are some recent or new projects, products, services, and/or endeavors?

JENNIFER: In the past few years, I have become a Certified First Responder Counselor, a Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist, and A Certified Advance Grief Counseling Specialist. These certifications have enabled me to gain insight and a greater understanding into the challenges so many of us face throughout our lives. As a Certified First Responder Counselor, I have heightened insight into the lives of our First Responders as their career is not just a career but a way of life.

TSG: Is there any insider advice you would give to your clients or customers?

JENNIFER: My best advice would be that even though the idea of counseling can be daunting, especially if you had a prior negative experience with a counselor, it will be worth it. When you find a counselor who you connect with, you have a very different experience. Some advice for parents; remember that you are the true expert when it comes to your child(ren) and that your thoughts, feedback, and opinions matter. If you are working with a counselor who does not value your input, it is time to find a new one. Whenever I work with children I provide parents with feedback and give them the space to do the same. Counseling children is a team effort. However, it is also important to remember that when working with children it can take time for a counselor to build the trust and rapport necessary to really begin doing the deeper work and to ultimately, begin to see changes. Further, changes will likely not happen without the parent(s) consistent efforts at home as well which is why parents should ensure that the counselor is open to working together to ensure the best outcome possible.

Be sure to tell her **Scout** sent you!

TRUE NORTH PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, LLC (<https://tnpsnova.com>)

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703.226.9815

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