

# PSYCHOLOGY & COUNSELING ASSOCIATES

## TAKING TEAM WORK TO THE NEXT LEVEL

BY KARA ISHAM

When life presents challenges that are too difficult to handle alone, a compassionate listener is an invaluable ally. Local clinical psychologist Dr. Susan Shackelford, president and chief executive officer of Psychology & Counseling Associates in Fayetteville, understands the importance of genuine compassion. She and her colleagues take the time to know their clients on a personal level, joining them as they decide on the best solutions for their lives. "We sit back and allow them to go through the processes they need to go through, the struggles they need to go through, and come out on the other side. We don't lead or push them, we are just there alongside them," Shackelford said.

### LOVE IS THE KEY

Psychology & Counseling Associates provides group, family, couple and children's counseling services, offering a multi-disciplinary and multi-generational approach to treatment. Shackelford began her practice in 1996 with the hope that others would be able to feel the love that she and her colleagues have for the countless people they help every year. She said the staff and 14 doctors, psychologists and social workers that make up the practice also share this caring attitude. Confidentiality, good clinical work, and a high standard of training are the other requirements Shackelford has for all those working at Psychology & Counseling Associates. "The people here — my colleagues — are amazing. They have huge hearts and excellent training," Shackelford said. "It's about going the extra mile for people."

Shackelford received her original doctorate in industrial/organizational psychology from Texas A&M University. After serving as an assistant professor in



Dr. Susan Shackelford

the Department of Psychology at Louisiana State University for three years, she decided to complete a postdoctoral specialization in clinical psychology at The University of Tulsa. She received additional training in the Department of Psychiatry & Neurology at Tulane University School of Medicine and Charity Hospital in New Orleans. Her additional training gave her experience in both adult and children's counseling.

She began her solo practice after she and her husband returned to Northwest Arkansas. She gradually began adding other associates to develop an interdisciplinary practice integrating different specialties for both children and adults to cover the lifespan of clients. Psychology & Counseling Associates moved to its current location in 2003, expanding several times since then. The newest clinic, the Psychology & Counseling Associates Center for Children & Adolescents, opened in 2007.

### TEAMWORK PLUS TRAINING

Psychology & Counseling Associates offers treatment for such specialties as eating disorders, cognitive behaviors, and men's issues. Other areas of treatment include child therapy, play therapy, marital and family therapy, as well as adult and child psychology. Dr. Angela Chapman has been with the group for seven years. She believes that what makes the practice unique is having several professionals under one roof. She said they have the benefit of working closely with one another while still maintaining their individuality. The result is each professional is able to focus on what they do best while having access to the expertise in other fields if necessary.



Ashley Hendrix, Lavonna Latta, Nicole Ledbetter, Kathy Mellinger, Amy Speer, Kristin Murphy



"The therapy you get here is bar-none the best in Northwest Arkansas. It covers all the bases," Chapman said. Clinical psychologist and cognitive therapist Dr. Nathan Williams is another specialist who helps those who suffer from anxiety and mood disorders that are a result of factors such as chronic illness and life transitions. "It's really special that we have a collaboration between psychologists and psychiatrists," Williams said.

## RESEARCH BASED TREATMENT

Dr. Matt Crouch said the association is also unique because all the professionals believe in evidence-based practice. "The science behind what we do is important," Crouch said. "We are very big on validating treatments based on research. We have collaborative and multi-disciplinary efforts." Crouch said Shackelford has a very selective process for choosing the people who work in the practice and that they are all almost "over-trained," including the staff – who are a big part of the practice's success. Shackelford said, as the first point of contact for clients, the staff is in tune with the patients and doctors and always adheres to the strict code of confidentiality in the office. Shackelford believes every professional in the practice is special not only because of the expertise they can offer clients but because of the true dedication they have to helping others. "We practice well and do good," she said. "People entrust us with their deepest fears and concerns. We want them to feel relief from that first phone call to our office." ■

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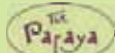


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