



Dr. Angelique Brathwaite, LCSW-C

Supervising Provider

angelique.brathwaite@hellobackpack.com

I've been a therapist for almost 18 years and the majority of that time I worked with children and adolescents. Many of them are in foster care. The biggest barrier that I came across was having a quiet and safe space for my clients to talk. Many times, we had to resort to walking outside, sitting in cars or writing in notebooks back and forth so no one would hear our conversations. Even though many guardians understood the need for therapy and supported it, they wanted to know what was being said. They wanted to give input, defend themselves, explain situations and "tell on" my client. This is not therapy. When siblings or others are around to hear your darkest secrets or important questions, this is not therapy. When you are sitting in a shared space and people are holding conversation and watching tv and your therapist is trying to hold your attention, this is not therapy. When someone stands behind you pretending to be busy but listening to everything that has been said, this is not therapy. When you are trying to heal but sitting in the same space that broke you, this is not therapy.

Allowing clinicians to come into schools and providing them with quiet and safe spaces to hold sessions – is therapy. Telehealth in schools allows for the biggest systems in the client's life to interact with each other, support the client and treat the client without distractions. Many families do not have the time or resources for clients to come to offices for therapy. They do not have the equipment or space for their children to have successful sessions at home.

We already understand that school is a safe haven for many of our children. This is a place where many get their meals, can stay warm, are away from unhealthy people and environments. Teachers play many roles in the schools, mothers, fathers, nurses, cheerleaders, and therapists. Let's give them a break and allow therapists to step more into their roles by allowing telehealth in all Maryland schools. Many of us try to go into schools but we get stopped because some think it's a disruption or they don't want the student to miss class time. Some believe it's just an excuse for the student to skip class. And some just use the power to have things the way they want it.

We cannot teach and prepare our students for the future if their mental health is not a priority. We need help and cooperation from everyone to make sure that we are providing our children

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with all resources and support to help them. Telehealth in all Maryland schools would eliminate many barriers to the children of our children.