

Patient Story

Kayla and Kaleb Jackson are 15-year-old twin siblings that have been treated in the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Behavioral and Mental Health (BMH) Outpatient Clinic for going on two years now. After witnessing their mother, Ms. Jackson, suffer from domestic abuse, Kayla and Kaleb started to display symptoms of anxiety and depression. The pandemic resulted in social isolation for them which further increased their symptoms of altered sleep, fatigue, depressed mood, excessive worrying, difficulties with attention and focus, and behavioral concerns.

As it became clear that their social and academic functioning were declining, their mother began to seek out mental health treatment. This proved to be a very difficult task due to a lack of high-quality resources for pediatric mental health treatment who accept state insurance plans in the state of Georgia. Kayla and Kaleb received care from many different therapists who did not have expertise in the care of children, and their symptoms did not improve. Their mother learned about Children's BMH Outpatient Clinic when it opened in Fall 2021 through Kaleb's provider at Marcus Autism Center who referred him to the Clinic for psychotherapy to address depression, anxiety, and behavior concerns.

After Kaleb started psychotherapy in Children's BMH Outpatient clinic, his mother started noticing improvement in his depression, anxiety, and behavior. Because of this, she knew she wanted to get Kayla seen by the clinic for her anxiety and depression symptoms. Kayla started coming to the clinic for both psychiatry and psychotherapy services, and over time, she noticed improvement in her depression and anxiety as well.

Now, Kayla and Kaleb are in the 10th grade and are doing well academically and socially. Kayla, Kaleb and their mother wanted our donors to be aware of their story because they stated that Children's BMH Outpatient Clinic helped their entire family. Some of the comments expressed by Kayla, Kaleb, and their mother included "we are so grateful", "we don't know what we would have done without the outpatient clinic", and "we want other families to get the care they need too." Ms. Jackson expressed that she wants other children and families in the state of Georgia to have access to high-quality pediatric behavioral and mental healthcare regardless of their socioeconomic background or payer source, and she believes that Children's is paving the way to make pediatric behavioral and mental healthcare more accessible for our state.

