

## The Lasting Effects of Trauma

### *How LCFS is Working to Help Heal and Repair Lives*

When hearing the word trauma, most people think of a one-time experience that is extremely stressful, frightening, painful or life-changing. What most people don't realize is that trauma and its effects on the human psyche can live on – often for years. Trauma memories lurk in the subconscious and can resurface as anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, flashbacks or nightmares. It can cause ongoing issues with productivity, self-esteem, relationships and self-care.

For the overall health of a community, the effects on the lives of individuals who experience trauma should not be ignored. Over the past decade there has been growing research on the lingering damage of psychological trauma. Studies are concluding that trauma inflicted during childhood is often the root cause for mental illness later in life. The majority of these traumas are triggered by exposure to violence, abuse and neglect.

Also found in these studies is that there is a strong correlation between poverty status and a traumatic childhood experience. A recent study exploring data from low-income Milwaukee and Racine area communities found that 83% of adults surveyed believe they were exposed to at least one traumatic experience during childhood and 42% said they experienced four or more. Results also found that the children of many of these participants were at risk for developmental delays. (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel July 2, 2018*).

While traumatic events vary widely, they are most damaging when they violate an individual's feeling of safety and security, causing them to feel helpless, overwhelmed and isolated.

"Many of the clients I see have deep-rooted issues caused by a traumatic event," says Glenn Peters, LPC, CSAC. "Often they don't remember what actually happened. They have repressed the memories, but those memories are just below the surface. They may find themselves in a situation where their ability to cope breaks down and they are

unable to manage their emotional responses, fight or flight reactions, or symptoms of stress and anxiety."

This Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) behavior can result in a chronic state of anxiety, stress, or cause relationship issues. "The most important thing I can do as a counselor," says Peters, "is to help them understand what is triggering their responses and help them resolve the underlying pain and confusion they are experiencing."

For children, a traumatic experience can have severe and long-lasting effects. If not addressed, it can result in feelings of helplessness, self-esteem issues or unresolved emotional responses that can carry into adulthood.

LCFS is currently working with 13 area elementary schools to counsel children who are experiencing mental health or behavioral issues. "A majority of the students that I see through LCFS's In School Counseling program have experienced some type of trauma," says Andrea Alfke, LPC. "It's often directly tied to their inability to function in class, form trusting relationships and focus on positive things in their lives. I see first-hand how important it is to address these issues early and with consistency."

Through counseling, both children and adults learn to overcome the pain (both physical and psychological) caused by their trauma experience. They begin to build trusting relationships and to regain a sense of emotional balance. LCFS's licensed counselors use professionally trained techniques such as cognitive-behavioral, rational emotive, trauma focused care, art, play therapy and relaxation techniques to help each individual find balance and peace.

Traumatizing events take a serious emotional toll on those involved. LCFS is committed to help those affected by helping individuals to heal and move forward. When individuals can thrive, families can grow and communities can become stronger, counseling can be deemed a

**Thank you to the following foundations which generously help to support LCFS:**

The Batterman Family Foundation, The Brewers Community Fund, The Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors Youth Foundation, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The Siebert Lutheran Foundation, The Burmester Foundation, The Green Bay Packer Foundation and hundreds of individuals through private donations. We are making a difference!

## Behind the Scenes Inspiration

There are volunteers and then there are SUPER VOLUNTEERS. **Pam Wennesheimer** falls into that category.

Pam has been volunteering at LCFS for 2 years and can truly be defined as the agency's "jack of all trades" and "wearer of many hats"! Her heart for the mission of the organization is evident in all she says and does. She volunteers approximately 6 times a month—more if needed—completing all the little tasks that seem small, but are incredibly important to the smooth operation of our busy agency.

Pam can be found spending her day entrenched in office work - filing of client forms, credit card balances, completed invoices and other daily chores. She also covers the reception desk and is often heard chatting with clients to make them feel comfortable, safe and welcomed. She is encouraging to those who

find themselves "down", understanding to those who are at crossroads in their lives and supportive for those who worry what their futures may hold.

Pam also uses her incredible artistic talent to decorate the interior hallways and waiting areas with uplifting messages for each season and holiday. Through all of her actions, Pam emits a deep commitment to helping others to be happy and to feel comforted.

Like all volunteers, Pam gives the gift of her time openly. But she also openly gives of her heart, leaving all she meets with feelings of positivity and joy. LCFS is truly blessed to have Pam as a volunteer.

***"Ladybug" Pam welcomes visitors at LCFS's Harvest Fest.***



### ***A Message from the CEO Deb Rayburn, MS, LPC, CSAC, CSIT***



With fall upon us, I am reminded how hard work sowed in the spring can result in a bountiful harvest in the autumn! Last spring, LCFS sought to expand its In School Counseling to more schools—particularly those in struggling socio-economic areas. The success we had during the 2017/18 school year was impressive with students benefitting

greatly. Nearly all met the individual goals set for them and were able to become more productive in the classroom, connect better socially, develop confidence and truthfully, just become happier children! Our counseling is making a difference!

We are proud to announce that LCFS will be providing counseling at 13 schools for the 2018/19 school year! Think of the children who will receive essential counseling services and how many futures will be positively affected! And we are able to provide this service at no cost to the schools and can help families who are financially strapped cover fees thanks to the generosity of foundations and caring individuals who have provided us with grants and donations. **THANK YOU!**

Many of these children have experienced some type of trauma in their young lives. Without counseling, this is damage that may carry into their adult lives. We provide each child with compassionate care. Healing is taking place. This is our harvest—and it couldn't be better!

Blessings to you! ~ Deb Rayburn, CEO

### **Thrivent Members Can "Live Generously"!**

If you are a Thrivent member and have Choice Dollars available, please consider directing them to LCFS! These funds would go directly to support several of our key services including adoption counseling, mental health counseling, alcohol and drug addiction treatment and the In School Counseling program. Your Choice Dollars are available to you as a Thrivent member can be directed as you wish.

Or if you would be willing to form an "Action Team" as a Thrivent member, LCFS is in need of **Pediatric Counseling Supplies** for our In School Counseling program. Art supplies, dolls, stress balls, white boards, puppets, books are all essential tools for counselors working with children. An Action Team would work towards assembling supply kits for teachers in participating classrooms. It's free and easy on your part!

Through Thrivent you can make an impact on your community!

#### **Online:**

For Choice Dollars, go to [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice). In the Direct Choice Dollars section on the right, click "Get started". For Action Teams, go to [Thrivent.com/actionteam](http://Thrivent.com/actionteam).

#### **By phone:**

Call 800-847-4836 and a representative will work with you in directing your Choice Dollars to LCFS.

**THANK YOU!!**

**Contact LCFS at 414-536-8333, FAX—414-536-8348 or EMAIL at [lcfs@lcfswi.org](mailto:lcfs@lcfswi.org)**

# Dealing With Depression

Depression is real. It is not just a “bad mood” or a “mokey attitude”. It is a serious mood disorder which affects how a person feels, thinks, functions and relates to others. One in 10 Americans struggle with diagnosed depression and while it can be serious, it is far from hopeless. Professional counseling can help people overcome the destructiveness of depression and regain emotional balance in their lives.

## One client's story

Brenda is a 34 year old woman who sought counseling with LCFS. She was ready to confront her issues with depression, anxiety and alcohol dependence. Her counselor's initial assessment found that Brenda not only suffered from clinical depression, but she was also dealing with lingering issues related to trauma, domestic violence and self-abuse.

At the start of counseling sessions, Brenda was deeply depressed and having suicidal thoughts. She had recently lost her job (a result of her inability to cope and alcohol use), she fled her abusive partner, and lost custody of her 11 year old daughter to her mother – of whom she was estranged. She, in her words, had “hit rock bottom and saw no reason to continue with life”.

Brenda's first goal was to seek treatment and attain abstinence from her alcohol dependence, which through extensive counseling and involvement with a 12-step program, she was able to accomplish. During

this time, she also began working through earlier traumas and learning to identify triggers for her depression. She developed coping skills and tools to assist with her emotional memories. Positive affirmation and building upon her strengths helped Brenda sort through these emotional memories and believe in herself again.

In time, Brenda began working on repairing her relationship with her mother. She understood how her depression and mental health issues affected her family. She was able to find a job, of which she quickly mastered and excelled. Through counseling she built self-esteem and was able to trust in others and establish relationships. She began to socialize with co-workers and even joined a work sponsored sports league.

Going forward, Brenda hopes to regain custody of her daughter. She wants to prove that she will be able to care for both herself and her daughter in a positive and healthy manner. Her counselor continues to be available to help her on her recovery journey.

**If you or someone you know is in crisis, or in need of immediate help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-TALK (8255).**

**If it is time to seek professional care, please consider Lutheran Counseling & Family Services of Wisconsin. Call us at 414-536-8333.**

**PLEASE USE THESE FUNDS  
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☐ **I would like to learn more about LCFS's free  
Planned Giving Services.**

☐ **I would like to be added to the LCFS quarterly  
newsletter email list.**

**ONLINE:** Donations can be made through  
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# Together We Make a Family

## *Step Parent Adoption Where Love and Family Come Together*

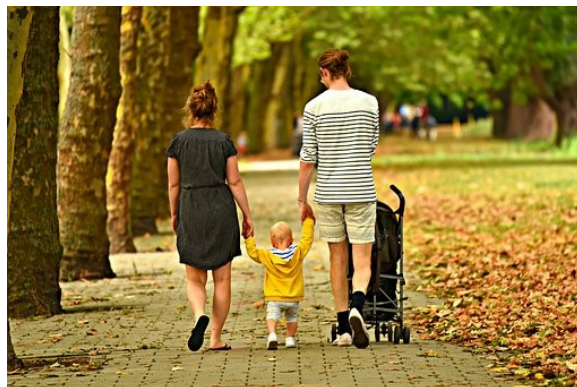
September 16<sup>th</sup> is National Stepfamily Day and is celebrated by many. One out of every three Americans - nearly 100 million - is either a stepparent, stepchild, or is part of a blended family.

LCFS assists many blended families who seek to solidify their relationship through adoption. Families may choose adoption due to the absence, abandonment or death of a biological parent. LCFS helps stepfamilies through the adoption process which includes background checks and a home visit interview. Both the adopting parent and child are given an opportunity to discuss their relationship with one another and state why they believe adoption will benefit their family. An agency prepared screening report is then sent to the judge and guardian ad litem for review.

The most important factor is the desire of the stepfamily to show the child their relationship is permanent and united. Nearly every stepparent who applies to adopt indicates the child is already theirs, just not legally. To them, the adoption is merely a formality.

Couples who are thinking about stepparent adoption should consider the following:

- A stepchild who is adopted receives the same inheritance and other legal rights as any biological children in the family—including medical insurance coverage rights.
- An adoptive parent has the right to consent in emergencies.
- Adoption can secure guardianship in case a partner dies.
- Adoption tells the world that you are a permanent family!



### *Congratulations to the following families on the completion of their adoptions:*

- ♥ *Samantha and Zachary on his adoption of their son, Karter, 5/14/2018*
- ♥ *Angela and Justin on their adoption of their daughter, Samantha, 5/17/2018*
- ♥ *Shelbi and Joshua on his adoption of their daughter, Savannah, 7/12/2018*
- ♥ *Katrina and Brian on his adoption of their son, Alex, 7/30/2018*
- ♥ *Heather and David on his adoption of their daughter, Grace, 8/17/2018*

Together  
we make a  
Family

#### LCFS Contact Information

Web Site—[www.lcfswi.org](http://www.lcfswi.org) ~ Follow us on Facebook!

#### Telephone Numbers

Main Office—414-536-8333  
Toll Free (Southern Wisconsin)—800-291-4513  
Toll Free (Northern Wisconsin)—888-867-4840

#### E-mail Addresses

General—[lcfswi@lcfswi.org](mailto:lcfswi@lcfswi.org)  
CEO—Deb Rayburn, MS, LPC, CSAC, CSIT [drayburn@lcfswi.org](mailto:drayburn@lcfswi.org)