“You cannot do good ministry if you think you are going to do this on your own. You need someone who you can talk to.”

~ Rev. Sara Kayser

Inspired by God’s Love

DOING GOD’S WORK

“Pastors open their doors to listen to people, and that helps for some. But, we are not therapists. We need to know where to send our people if we cannot help them,” said Rev. Sara Kayser. “And, I need someone in my back pocket in case my life falls apart.”

In just the last two months, Rev. Kayser had a particularly emotional funeral service, she sat beside someone struggling with addiction, and she listened intently to a teen trying to figure out the ups and downs of being a teen. “That’s the reality of living. That’s the reality of every pastor,” she explained. “And in South Dakota’s rural communities, how do we help our farmers and ranchers who are under some tremendous pressures right now?”

“A professor in seminary told us, the first thing you need to do when you get settled in a new area is to access a counselor. You cannot do good ministry if you think you are going to do this on your own. You need someone who you can talk to,” said Sara. “And it’s true.”

“I can help people, but I also have family issues and relationship issues just like everyone else. I am human. My burdens are not my congregation’s burdens,” she continued.

Sara has struggled with depression for a long time. “I needed to find a place that had a good reputation and where I felt safe. It’s not because I am Lutheran that I picked LSS. It’s about LSS. As an organization, I knew that I could trust them and that they would have my best interest at hand,” she said. “I trust the concept of LSS. They are not the church, but they are doing the work of the church.”

“There is nothing wrong with saying that I can’t do it by myself. I need help,” said Sara. “The pressures are great. Expectations are high. People are counting on you. There are days when I think that I can’t do this anymore. We need more people to talk about that because that is how we make it real. Otherwise, we have a false idea of what life really is like. I go to therapy not because life is horrible or I can’t handle it, I go to see the good things that are happening in my life and to recognize that my life is good.”

(continued)
THE FIRST STEP IS THE HARDEST

“No matter what I say, there is going to be that fear and apprehension,” said Sara. “But there are people at LSS who really want to help me. They understand that this is not easy, and they know how to deal with that. How many times do we hang up before we let the call go through? That’s normal. But I’m always glad that I do it. It’s not until I hang up the phone that I feel it’s ok. I’m going to be ok.”

“Even the drive there, ‘What’s this going to be like? Is the person going to be nice? Am I going to be respected?’ All this stuff is going through your brain. Then I walk in the door and I’m welcomed,” she explained. “Every time I go, there is this nervous energy that I always have. It’s part fear and part excitement in the hope that I’m going to get better.”

HOLDING ON TO THE HOPE

“There are days when I’m just not going to smile. If someone says ‘smile’, I’m going to tell them to shut up and leave me alone,” Sara joked. But seriously, “There are days when I just can’t let go of the pain.”

“When someone has depression, even mild depression, there are days of darkness where everything looks dreary. But, how do we get better? We need to acknowledge our mental well-being and make it ok to ask for help.”

“But even if I can’t smile, even if I can’t let go of my pain, I need that hope! That’s what makes tomorrow possible. That’s what makes finishing the day possible.”

LSS needs your support. We cannot do this ministry alone.

Last year, LSS Behavioral Health Services cared for 5,978 people and families across the state of South Dakota: people who struggle with depression as well as grief and loss, others who live with a substance abuse disorder, and those who are simply overwhelmed with the challenges that life presents. The list is as long and as unique as each individual.

NOW IS THE TIME TO TALK

LSS is committed to providing confidential, professional and affordable behavioral health services to people of all ages and families of all kinds. And through LSS Disaster Response Services, LSS offers crisis counseling to communities of all sizes. To keep it affordable, clients pay based on their income, which means we operate this service at a loss.

Last year, 48 percent of those served through LSS outpatient behavioral health services (1,376 people) had an annual income of less than $30,000. The ability to sustain this service and keep it affordable for everyone means we have to rely on the help of much-needed funding from individuals, businesses, and of course churches and congregations. Each of the past two years, LSS has operated at a loss of more than $170,000 in behavioral health services. Your help is needed now and this coming year!

Now is the time to commit to placing LSS in your annual budget so that we can continue to do God’s work on behalf of the church. LSS remains committed to serving you, your congregation and the people in your community.

AN ORGANIZATION YOU CAN TRUST

Of every dollar donated to LSS, 84 cents goes directly to client services.

HOW YOUR GIFT SERVED

LSS SERVICES: Behavioral Health Services • Adoption • Pregnancy Counseling • Foster Care • Kinship Services • Childcare & Education • Disaster Response • Re-entry Services • Center for Financial Resources • Residential Services for Children & Youth • Alternatives to Detention • Independent Living Services for Young Adults • Mentoring Services • Better Together • Center for New Americans

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