

Lutheran Counseling Center



22 Cortlandt Street • 20th Floor
New York, NY 10007
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www.LDRNY.org

LDRNY MISSION STATEMENT

To respond directly and encourage and facilitate response from others to the needs of persons and their families affected both directly and indirectly by tragedy or disaster.

Services:

- Educational seminars
- Support groups
- Immediate counseling help available for walk-ins at all our sites on the first days following 9/11
- Counseling sessions funded by LDRNY for victims, families and those adversely affected (this does not include the hundreds of calls received that were crisis intervention related and dealt with immediately by phone)

Session hours from 9/11/01 to 12/31/01: 164

Session hours from 1/01/02 to 12/31/02: 1,550

Session hours from 1/01/03 to 12/31/03: 1,161

- Educational resources reviewed, copied and mailed to churches, schools and individuals.
- 24-hour coverage of 800 telephone number manned by volunteers and LCC psychotherapists in order to provide individuals counseling intervention if needed. Coverage was extended for first year.
- 24-hour coverage of 800 telephone number manned by LCC psycho therapists was reinstated in April 2003, when war with Iraq began, and ended Oct. 1, 2003.

Consultation Circles — a one-year comprehensive wellness initiative for clergy. Consultation Circles is a pilot project designed to promote and sustain habits of wellness for clergy. It was funded by Lutheran Disaster Response of New York.



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Executive Director Ausma O. Mursch

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He Brought Me Flowers

It was our fifth and last session. He brought me flowers. The parents of this 9-year-old came to the Lutheran Counseling Center in need of help. Their son had been very afraid of crossing over bridges and planes flying overhead since 9/11. This child was able to “add tools to his toolbox” and reduce his symptoms of anxiety. Many children are experiencing the same kind of anxiety as they grow up in our post-9/11 culture and, with the right coping skills, are able to develop the tools they need to become healthy adults. For this child, five sessions funded by LDRNY made all the difference. His mother came to our last session and reported that he has become quite skilled at using his new tools. He was grateful that he didn't feel the need to panic when crossing over bridges anymore and so...he brought me flowers.

It Has Taken A Toll On Our Family

A pastor from one of the Lutheran congregations referred the wife of a young New York City firefighter to the Lutheran Counseling Center. Her husband lost a close family member at the WTC Disaster but was out of town with his family when the disaster occurred. Upon return to New York, he volunteered many hours in the attempt to find victims and helped in the subsequent cleanup effort at the site. This meant a lot of time away from home, his wife and children. He felt guilty that he was not at work when the disaster occurred but dealt with the guilt silently. His wife feels that his time away from home for three months after the disaster and his grief over the loss of the family friend and other firefighter friends has taken a toll on their marriage. Our counselors provided personal counseling for the firefighter as well as marriage counseling for them as a couple. Later on, the children, who were also affected by the absence of their father and by their fears for his safety, came in for counseling. This family has been coming for counseling off and on for the past two years in order to get their lives back together again.

How Do You Talk To Children And Youth Experiencing Fear And Anxiety?

The Lutheran congregation requested a pastoral therapist, who worked with children, to help the pastor work with the youth of the church in addressing some of the presenting issues and questions in the context of his ministry. On Friday evening, a group of elementary age youth gathered, followed by a dozen or so older adolescents. The unspoken topic was, How do you talk to children and youth experiencing fear and anxiety? It proved to be a wonderful evening of sharing stories, asking questions, discussing deep felt fears, and finding helpful answers. One of the children attending became a client of the Center. Her brother had never been found after the 9/11 attacks.

The Nightmares Began To Haunt Me

She came in, sat in the chair opposite mine, and introduced herself as the mother of Brian. Her son had called home from the top of one of the Twin Towers, reported the terrible accident, and said he was helping people leave. That was the last she heard. She thought that she had dealt with her pain, but suddenly two years later the nightmares began to haunt her. We spent an hour sharing tears and the awful pain of losing a son. We held hands and prayed together. After a year of therapy the loss is not as heavy.