



How to Survive and Thrive During the Holidays

Exclusive Q & A with Laura Hoffman, LSSI's Clinical Director

Editor's note: We all love the idea of a "Norman Rockwell" Thanksgiving or Christmas, with extended family gathered around a perfectly glazed turkey with all the fixings. Unfortunately, few of us experience this kind of idyllic scene during the holidays. In fact, at the time of year when we desire peace and joy the most, many of us face a wide range of other emotions, such as sadness, fear, and anger, instead. Here, Laura Hoffman, Clinical Director, describes how LSSI's training in trauma-informed care can prepare us for the anxiety we might experience during upcoming holiday celebrations.

Q: What is trauma-informed care, and how does it benefit LSSI clients?

A: Trauma-informed care is a relatively new approach to client interactions based on emerging information about the way our brains work. As a staff, we began training in trauma-informed care in 2011 and have continued exploring ways to use this approach to help clients. As its name implies, trauma-informed care reveals how adverse experiences can affect our brain chemistry and ultimately impact our interactions with the people around us. Understanding the cause and impact of these stressful situations can unlock a door that leads to hope and healing. Instead of asking people why they are not achieving their goals, trauma-informed care encourages us to ask, "What has happened to you?" Understanding the answer can lead to practical ways to move forward.

Q: What kind of trauma creates this impact?

A: When we hear the word "trauma," most of us think about acute or severe situations, such as domestic violence or abuse. We certainly deal with those kinds of experiences with some of our clients here at LSSI, but trauma also affects most people in ways they may not even realize. It can be something such as losing someone we love, going through a painful divorce, or experiencing rejection from people we love and trust. In fact, a recent study of college-educated, middle class adults revealed a prevalence of adverse childhood experiences. In other words, regardless of our socio-economic status, most of us have experienced that kind of stress at some point in our lives.

Q: How does that stress affect us during the holidays?

A: I think the holidays tend to intensify whatever we are feeling at the moment. Those effects can be worsened by a number of factors, including unrealistic pressure or expectations that we place on ourselves, or unrealistic demands or expectations from others. Grief and loss are more pronounced during the holidays, too, especially during family gatherings, where the person we have lost is missing.

Q: What are your suggestions for dealing with these emotions?

A: First and foremost, be prepared. Know your stress triggers and have a plan in place to deal with them. A hot bath or soothing music can go a long way to establishing a sense of calm. Next, ask for support from a trusted family member, friend, or pastor. It is especially important to stay open and keep communicating when we are hurting or stressed. In addition, you need to know that it is okay to feel whatever you are feeling in that moment, and to give yourself permission to rest when needed.

Finally, reducing your expectations can go a long way to limiting the stressful effects of the holidays. Do you really need to bake 13 fruitcakes? Send a gift to everyone on that very long list? Travel for miles on the Interstate with fussy babies, just for a few hours with extended family? Maybe not this year. Instead, try baking just a few simple dishes or plan a get-together after the holidays, making sure to communicate your limits ahead of time. ■

Let's keep in touch

Interested in being kept in the loop? Sign up for our mailing list and you'll have access to regular updates on happenings at LSSI.
Sign up at <http://lssin.org/get-involved/join-our-mailing-list/>.

Please indicate if you prefer to receive updates via email or in your mailbox.

Because of You

Thank you, **Subway**, for donating “Inside Out” lunch/tote bags and stickers. These resources make amazing therapeutic tools, creating visual cues for our staff to use in discussing emotions with the children in our programs.

Many thanks, **Huntertown United Methodist Church**. The clothes, baby items, and household supplies you contribute on a weekly basis make a huge difference in the lives our clients!

Support LSSI when you shop!

There are two new ways you can help support LSSI when you shop:

First, Kroger has a Community Awards program in which a portion of your grocery bill can benefit Lutheran Social Services of Indiana. Please visit www.krogercommunityrewards.com and choose Lutheran Social Services of Indiana!

Second, you can shop at AmazonSmile and Amazon will make a donation to LSSI. Go to <http://smile.amazon.com/> to register.

Let your light so shine

A letter from Angela Moellering, President and CEO

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
– **John 8:12**



There is much darkness and struggle in our world today. We are reminded often that we live in a fallen, sinful world. We here at Lutheran Social Services of Indiana often see the impact of that darkness as we work

with those who are struggling and in need of the “Light.” We know that Jesus came as a baby with the purpose of being the light of the world. It is this knowledge that allows us to take the love of Jesus into the homes of those we serve, that motivates us to share the Hope that is in Jesus, and that encourages those we serve to learn more about the Gospel message. I am so thankful that we can share the Light of the World.

Sometimes, that light comes in the form of tangible gifts, such as those we distribute during our Adopt-a-Family Christmas Program. Other times, we shed light when we offer trauma-informed care to help

individuals realize the impact of stressful situations and develop strategies to overcome that trauma. These services would never be possible, however, without the financial gifts of our supporters. Your dollars give us the flexibility to pursue evidenced-based training that can make a real difference in the lives of the people we serve. Thanks to the trauma-informed care training our staff has received, we are uniquely equipped to bring light and hope into lives marked by suffering and despair.

“We know that Jesus came as a baby with the purpose of being the light of the world. It is this knowledge that allows us to take the love of Jesus into the homes of those we serve.”

So thank you for giving of yourself and your resources to LSSI this past year. Through your generosity, we have been able to provide the hope and healing that is only possible through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

May you and your family be truly blessed this Christmas, with all wishes for a joyous and happy New Year.

Sharing the Love of Christ at Christmastime

How LSSI is making a difference for clients in northeast Indiana

For over 20 years, Lutheran Social Services of Indiana has been making Christmas wishes come true through its annual Adopt-a-Family Christmas Program. Designed to brighten the Christmas of those currently enrolled in one of LSSI’s programs and actively working toward family stability goals, the Adopt-a-Family Christmas Program touches hundreds of people in northeast Indiana while demonstrating the love of Jesus.

How it works

Every fall, LSSI case managers help clients complete a Christmas program application

and record wish lists for each person in the family. That list usually includes household items, such as sheets, silverware, or pots and pans, as well as board games, small toys, or books for children. Next, LSSI staff matches families with sponsors who want to contribute those gifts, along with a laundry basket filled with non-perishable food items and a grocery gift card for fresh foods.

Finally, volunteers gather at Concordia Lutheran High School for two days in December—collecting all the gifts and food and distributing them to families. Dennis

Herman, Director of Church Relations at LSSI, has participated in this gift-distribution for years. “These gifts allow families who are struggling to make ends meet to actually have a Christmas for their children,” he says. “They are always so thankful. When they pick up their baskets, they give some of the best hugs you will receive all year!”

Sharing the love of Christ in tangible ways is just part of the program. Kristi Stanley, Director of Intake/Grants Manager, and coordinator for the Adopt-a-Family Christmas Program, explains. “Our ultimate goal is to

**You can donate online with a credit card at www.lssin.org.
Just hit the donate button at the top of the page!**



Meet our super heroes!

We have always thought of our staff members as super heroes, especially when they bring hope and healing to clients who need it most. During our annual Penny Wars spirit week, however, they actually dressed the part! "Dress Like a Super Hero Day" was just one of many fun ways that we kicked off our annual Halos of Hope campaign, where we encourage every staff and board member to make financial contributions to our agency.

How Penny Wars Works

Throughout the Penny Wars spirit week,

staff members at our Lewis Street and Children's Village locations placed pennies in their own team's jar, earning one point for every penny, while working to "sabotage" other teams' jars with nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars, creating "negative" points for the other team. The friendly rivalry paid off, to the tune of \$659.20 raised during Penny Wars alone. Special thanks to all our staff who contributed during the week, and a big thank you to everyone who continues giving through one-time contributions and payroll deductions all year long! ■



\$659.20
RAISED DURING PENNY WARS

"These gifts allow families who are struggling to make ends meet to actually have a Christmas for their children. They are always so thankful. When they pick up their baskets, they give some of the best hugs you will receive all year." – Dennis Herman, Director of Church Relations

share salvation with each client, and our Christmas program is just part of that effort," she says. That is why, in addition to the presents, LSSI includes adult and children's Bibles in the gift baskets, as well as materials that explain the Gospel message and tell of Christ's love for us.

If you would like more information about the Christmas program or other sponsorship opportunities, please give Kristi Stanley a call at (260) 426-3347. ■

Adopt-a-Family Christmas Program BY THE NUMBERS

- Individual receiving gifts ▶ **510**
- Families served ▶ **117**
- Number of people turned away ▶ **0**



If you would like to receive an electronic copy of *Perspective*, please contact Rebecca Bash at RBash@lssin.org or (260) 426-3347.



Once again, LSSI is offering our Justice Bread gift loaves for the Christmas season. You can choose from a variety of bread types, including cranberry, wheat, or pumpkin. Each loaf comes wrapped in holiday colors, and each package contains a card bearing a seasonal message, making these loaves the perfect gift for friends, neighbors, and family members!

Please note that gift loaf orders are due on Monday, December 7, by 11 a.m. Wrapped gift loaves are \$3.50 each. If you prefer unwrapped loaves, they are just \$3. (Please indicate if you want wrapped or unwrapped bread when placing your order with your Lutheran church Justice Bread coordinator.)

And remember, when you buy a loaf of Justice Bread, you are not just giving a holiday treat; you are sharing the love of Christ with the less fortunate, since all proceeds from the sale of Justice Bread benefit those in need in our community.

If your church does not offer the Justice Bread program, you can order loaves directly through our main office by calling LSSI at (260) 426-3347 and ask for Andrea.

LSSI WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

PNC: Grow Up Great Initiative – for enhancing structured learning in the classroom, parent engagement, and staff development at Children’s Village Early Learning Center.

United Way of Allen County – for supporting our Children’s Village Early Learning Center, Education Creates Hope and Opportunity (ECHO) and Cup of Kindness programs.

The English, Bontert, Mitchell Foundation – for providing families with strength-based, on-going education, motivation, and support through our Cup of Kindness/Financial Stability program, which helps families achieve long-term, independent financial stability.

SAVE THE DATE
2016 ANNUAL MEETING
 Thursday, March 10



Lutheran Social Services of Indiana expresses the love of Jesus Christ for all people through services that empower individuals and families to move toward social, emotional, and spiritual wholeness.

Mission



Help you need. Hope you can trust.

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