

“Something secret, something awful happened ...”

Feeling that we have to hide something from others is a heavy burden. Psychologist Gershen Kaufman says, “To live with shame is to feel alienated and defeated, never quite good enough to belong. And, secretly, we feel we are to blame, that the deficiency lives within ourselves, alone. Shame is, without parallel, a sickness of the soul.”

Secret fears and anger can leave us paralyzed, cut off from close relationships. We can't go back and change those experiences but counseling can provide a bridge to healing. Counselors provide support and help us find the courage we need to identify the painful issues, express grief or anger, and learn how to nurture and affirm our own worth. They can help us remove the power and control that secrets can have.

Some things we *can* change. We can reclaim the respect and dignity God planned for us. We can begin to restore an essential inner peace that allows us to grow and share our lives more fully with those we love. We can learn to celebrate life again!



Lutheran Social Service
for changing lives

Call 651.642.5990 or 1.800.582.5260
for the counseling office nearest you.

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Shame and Family Secrets

Some family secrets are fun ... like birthday surprises, or special gifts. Other secrets, like abuse or childhood trauma, can cripple the human spirit with feelings of shame, worthlessness and mistrust of others.

Check this list for signals:

- There's something I can't talk about to anyone.
- My world would crumble if others knew this.
- We pretend it didn't happen in our family.
- It must have been my fault.
- Someone else would be too hurt if this came out.
- I have to hide my anger about this experience.
- I'm afraid my children are being affected by this secret.

Secrets have a power of their own that can grow and control the lives of those involved. If not dealt with, their effects can damage not only those involved, but also others around them and later generations. If you can identify with any of these concerns, consider talking to an LSS counselor. Confidential support can give you courage to sort out feelings, issues and choices, and help you take back the power to control your life. You owe it to yourself and your family.

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