

From JoAnne:

I received my Master of Arts in Counseling in 1984 from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC; my husband and I started our family very shortly thereafter. Though I excelled in the academic setting, I was left feeling like something very important was missing in my approach to counseling. Despite being raised Catholic, receiving a Catholic education, and searching throughout my life for answers, I found myself completely at a loss in how to connect my belief in God with an effective way for growth, change and transformation in counseling those struggling with hopelessness, despair and great loss.

After the birth of our first child, I decided to make use of my degree by teaching as an adjunct professor at our local community college in Montgomery County, Maryland, as well as engaging in multiple volunteer opportunities through my church and community, and partaking in continuing educational activities in the field. Two more children were born by 1990. Life was full, busy and challenging and it was during this time that I slowly was able to poignantly experience the presence of God sustaining me in some of the most ordinary and remarkable of ways.

After moving to Pittsburgh in 1995, I joined a prayer group at my parish. It was in these weekly times of prayer and sharing with a group of other women that I began to awaken to the overwhelming love of God. From there, I began a group Scripture study which allowed me to see the link that actually exists between Jesus' teaching and scientifically tested psychological principles. This is truly a passion of mine, as I have seen that the path He provides for us is real. When we can get to the point to begin to see the path, we can learn to trust that it leads to that growth, change and transformation that I couldn't encounter (but wanted to!) in my younger years. Once I knew this to be true, I knew that I was ready and able to put my training to use. I came to Meier Clinics, where such a holistic approach is espoused. I have been working here since 2001.

In 2006 I returned to a post-graduate program at Waynesburg College's Graduate School of Counseling Psychology to pursue the additional credits needed to meet the current requirements of State Licensure. After passing the State Exam and meeting the prerequisites for supervised clinical hours of counseling, I became a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in 2007.

I also worked part time as a Group Counselor on the Inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at St. Clair Hospital in Mt. Lebanon for a number of years. In this setting folks are hospitalized because they have tried to hurt themselves, someone else, or are unable to care for themselves. As you might expect, the pain and isolation that arrives in that unit is intense and palpable. The groups, on the other hand, are a safe place where folks can begin to shed some of the aloneness and shame they may feel as they begin to experience acceptance from and reconnection to others. The groups are a *powerfully* healing experience. There is nothing short of a breath of life that emerges from a safe experience with others that reminds you of the value and worth you are endowed with, no matter what has happened to you.

Currently, much of my work with individual clients surrounds issues of anxiety, depression, grief, panic attacks, stress, women's issues and trauma in a setting that offers acceptance, empathy, prayer, confidentiality and encouragement. Training, peer supervision and continuing education is consistently ongoing. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about my background, training and therapeutic approaches that I utilize.

