



Lynn E. Geiger

Ph.D. | **Practice:** Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
**Years as a psychologist or psychiatrist:** 38

**What inspired you to work in the mental health field?**

I love helping people, and this field fits with my interest in getting to know people and learning about and understanding their story. Sharing my curiosity with someone gets them to see how and where they want to make changes in their lives.

**Do you see an uptick in mental health crises around the holidays? If so, why do you think that is?**

There is such stress between Thanksgiving and Christmas, and all the festivities at this time of year! There is stress to have the perfect holiday, the perfect dinner or party, the best presents, the coolest vacation, and to live up to some ideal. There is also sadness and loss when one's life and the holidays aren't perfect, missing family members, adjusting to change and to new traditions. So, there are quite a few crises to cope with.

**How do you differentiate between situational sadness and clinical depression?**

Situational sadness occurs in sad circumstances: loss of a loved one, your house and all of your belongings destroyed in a fire and so on. Often this type of sadness diminishes as time goes on and our situation changes. Clinical depression relates more to the degree of sadness one experiences: mild, moderate and severe. So, a situational sadness can be to any degree. Some people have a more chronic depression that doesn't just go away as a situation changes.

**What's the number one societal change you would like to see in regard to mental health?** Decrease the stigma of mental health disorders, increase everyone's knowledge about these conditions, and promote compassion towards others with a mental health disorder.

**What do you wish people knew about the work you do that is perhaps misunderstood?** There are different, specific protocols for various problems. We don't have to use the same treatment approach for each problem. My approach is to tailor the treatment to THIS person with THIS problem at THIS time and to match their strengths to the treatment plan. It's not a one-size-fits-all type of work.

**Without revealing identifying information, can you share one of your success stories?** Working with people struggling with trauma is the most dramatic. To see the positive changes with first responders, combat veterans, car and plane accident victims, survivors of physical and sexual abuse, and assault survivors is so uplifting. And it's equally special to see a child that can sleep at night without nightmares; or someone with ADHD tell me about their career growth because they learned about their condition and strategies to improve their coping with it; or a family that can heal past wounds and enjoy the holidays together. Our field has grown a lot, and there is a lot of success!

**Nature or nurture?** YES! This is like asking if hurricanes develop because of barometric pressure or water temperature. It's a complicated combination of both!

