



Photo from unsplash by Joseph Gonzalez

Isabella is an outgoing 8-year-old who came to counseling because of problems in school. She has a learning disability, which already made school a difficult place, but recent bullying made going to class even worse. Every morning, as the time came to go to school, Isabella would cry and beg not to go. Her teacher increasingly noticed the tardiness, absences, and tears. She knew Isabella needed help, and so did her family. But Isabella's mom had just lost her job, so counseling didn't seem like an option. The school connected Isabella's mom to NCC and told her about the sliding scale fees. It was such a relief for Isabella's mom! Isabella started seeing Sr. Sarah right away. In the comfort of a cozy counseling office and Sr. Sarah's gentle ways, Isabella felt free to let her deeper fears surface. In one session, Isabella tearfully told Sarah how worried she was that her father and grandfather, both from Mexico, would be taken away. It was only in the safe space of counseling that Isabella was able to get to the true root of her distress and discuss her very real fears provoked by what is happening in the world around her. The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center provides a crucial environment for kids and families, like Isabella, to process the weight of circumstance that are beyond their control.



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Reza was in his 20's when his sister took her own life. Her tragic death ushered in grief that he had never known. A car accident in her teens left her unable to take care of herself. Before her death, Reza had been her legal guardian and caretaker. He loved her deeply. Not only was he mourning his loss, but he was buried in overwhelming guilt that he had failed her. Reza was young and living on a limited income. Accessing counseling never struck him as a financial option. He called The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center (NCC) after learning there was a sliding scale for people without insurance, like him. When he arrived for his first session, Reza walked unsteadily and struggled to speak without his voice shaking. His therapist gently walked with him through his grief. After each session, Reza slowly got better. He stood tall when he walked into his last appointment. His voice was strong and steady when he told his counselor, "I am so thankful for this therapy. It made this process so much easier. It feels like I was supposed to be here." Reza coming to NCC was more than serendipitous. It was the culmination of donors and supporters whose generosity makes it possible for clients, like Reza, to receive quality and affordable care.



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Kate sat in the warm, yellow room of her new therapist. She tried to appear like everything was ok—like she was ok. But in reality, Kate was tired, in every sense of the word. She was tired of not being able to do simple, daily activities because of her anxiety and panic attacks. She was tired of not being able to sleep because of her persistent nightmares. She was tired of struggling financially, after losing her job a year ago. And although she desperately missed her mother, she was tired of being crippled by grief. She was ready to move forward, for herself and for her son. With the helping guidance of her counselor, Kate addressed the trauma of her past. Within three months of coming to the center, Kate was like a new person. She had a new job, found ways to manage her anxiety, and was able to return to the activities she had once left behind. Kate will always miss her mother, but the periods of grief were shortened and she was able to go back to normal. The person who pretended to be ok was replaced with a person who was finally and sincerely happy.



Photo by [Fineas Anton](#) on [Unsplash](#)

After moving to Portland with his family a few years ago, Malik couldn't find work in his field and slid into depression, becoming suicidal. Because of the Center's sliding scale fee, Malik was able to access help before it was too late. Working closely with his counselor, Malik was able to stabilize his depression and get a job working nights in maintenance. With this improvement, Malik decided he could go back to school, training for a new career in technology. Recently finishing counseling, Malik left this message on his counselor's voice mail:

*"Thank you for everything you and the Center have done. I really think you guys changed the course of something really bad for me. I think you saved me. I think that it works. I don't think I would be here without you. Thank you. I know you'll be here if I need you. I'll be sure you to call again if I do."*