

Spiritual Care Mission Moment

Maya



Maya shared her spiritual journey through mental health challenges during the Foundation's 2024 Gala.

Growing up on Long Island, New York, I attended a Catholic middle and high school, and during my time there my faith grew quickly.

The summer between middle and high school, I began experiencing really uncomfortable thoughts about a wide variety of things, and I felt urges to perform certain behaviors to try to get rid of the distress these thoughts caused.

For example, I remember having unwanted thoughts that God thought I was a bad person, and I felt the need to repeat prayers of repentance in my head until they felt "just right."

When I was 16 years old, I attended the OCD and Anxiety Center for Adolescents at Rogers Behavioral Health in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

During my treatment, I began to transition my view of my faith from a strict practice of a religion driven by fear - to a spiritual practice driven by my values.

Through exposure and response prevention therapy and my own personal reflection through daily journaling, I came to a life-changing realization part way through my stay: I can't be a perfect person, and I would much rather live my faith because I value my relationship with God rather than practice it out of fear.

Today, I'm happy to report that I've graduated high school, college, worked my first "big-girl" job, and have recently begun graduate school.

One of the biggest things that has happened since Rogers is that I practice my faith not out of anxiety, but because I want to, and because I value it.

I believe that for people who engage in spiritual practice, there can often be a bidirectional relationship between one's spiritual health and mental health. When one's mental health suffers, so can one's spiritual health, and vice-versa. Therefore, spiritual care can be an integral tool in one's mental health recovery.

This is why offering spiritual care at Rogers is so important. As a non-reimbursable program, it would not exist without donor funding. The Foundation pays for the entire program, including the Chaplains' salaries.

I'm grateful that Rogers offers a dedicated program for spiritual practice to support the treatment process!