

Agency for Change Podcast: Sandy Morrissey, Region V Systems

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Sandy Morrissey: 0:00

Keep moving forward, be kinder, be more gentler with yourself and others, and just keep moving forward and things will show themselves. You'll know your next steps.

Announcer: 0:15

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman: 0:38

Hey everyone, this is Lyn Wineman, president of KidGlov. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change podcast. So now I have talked with nearly 200 guests on this podcast and I am always fascinated by how people's personal journeys lead them to their career path, and today's guest is no exception. Please welcome Sandy Morrissey, Prevention Director of Region V Systems. I have known Sandy for several years now and there are few people more passionate or effective in the field of prevention work. Likewise, she has a personal story that will sound somewhat like a New York Times bestseller, and I do hope she writes that book someday. Sandy, I am eager to talk with you. Welcome to the podcast. Thanks, Lynn. Thanks for having me. I always love talking with you and I want to start with your professional life and then we'll get into your personal story and how the two intertwine. But let's just start by having you tell us about Region V Systems. We have listeners from all across the country and they may not be familiar with your organization.

Sandy Morrissey: 2:01

Absolutely. Region V Systems is one of six behavioral health entities in the state of Nebraska and we oversee federal funds for substance abuse and mental health. We also get other grants and we've received some opioid resettlement. We deal with suicide prevention. We have partnerships for success funding that allows us to really work on a broader level of community, but our focus is substance abuse and mental health.

Lyn Wineman: 2:33

Okay Sandy, you and I have talked about this before, but I think you have taught our team to be preventionists and to practice prevention through marketing and communications, and I love that your title is Prevention Director, and I mentioned in the intro that I believe there are a few people as passionate or as effective in the field of prevention as you are, so could you tell us what actually does a Prevention Director do?

Sandy Morrissey: 3:07

Absolutely. You know prevention is a funny word to different people. Some people look at it as prevent it, don't do it, stop it. As a Prevention Director, I really look for gaps and needs. We do system management. You know what are priorities in communities around substance abuse and mental health that need to be addressed and how do we identify it as a priority. What is the data showing us? Collaborating with community stakeholders in terms of how is it affecting, if there's a rippling effect and the sooner we can get on the bandwagon with prevention we can, which is less costly, we can actually get a lot more done and save people from having to get to that point of treatment and and the cost and the repetitive behavioral issues that go along once somebody gets to the point where it's a chronic issue.

Lyn Wineman: 4:08

Yeah, and, Sandy, because you mentioned community and community advocates. Prevention doesn't happen in a vacuum, does it? It's more of a team sport.

Sandy Morrissey: 4:19

It definitely is. You know, I worked treatment for some time in the past and when I really latched on to prevention in terms of beginning to understand it in the late 80s and early 90s, it made such sense to me that if we did more in terms of information dissemination, some education, some evidence-based programs to help families, community at large, in terms of what messages do we put out in regards to substance use and mental health and, of course, within prevention, once any type of intervention starts, our prevention dollars stop. So it's really mental health promotion. You know, when things are going on with kids, what can we put in place to help them so that they grow into healthy adults?

Lyn Wineman: 5:10

Yeah, because it's a lot easier. I imagine it's not easy, but it's a lot more maybe productive to do the work before the issue arises, then to go into the recovery phase, I imagine.

Sandy Morrissey: 5:28

Right. And you know, sometimes I think when we say substance use prevention people think that we are anti-alcohol or whatever choice of drug and really our goal is because youth and their brains are developing still at such a rapid pace. There's a lot of research to support no use as a youth and, you know, as adults it's about role modeling and you know it's your choice or anyone's choice if they choose to use substances. But what are they modeling and what's healthy and what's not? And you know it's that rippling effect of drinking and driving, vaping or smoking, taking more pills maybe than necessary. So it's really beginning to work on healthy coping skills. Looking at family history, is there really a focus on anxiety and depression that needs to be addressed?

Lyn Wineman: 6:30

Yeah, very much so, very much so. So, since you mentioned you know that you started your work, I think, in recovery, right, did I hear you say that? Yeah, I really love to hear how you got involved in this

work. I don't imagine that as a young adult, you even had the language to say I would like to be a prevention director someday.

Sandy Morrissey: 6:58

You know, Lyn, it's very personal to me on various levels. But even as a little girl I knew that my dad's drinking was not normal. Yeah, and he was a very social drinker. I mean we never had any significant, there was not abuse, there was not legal offenses. He did very well as a stockbroker and municipal bonds, but they socialized a lot.

Sandy Morrissey: 7:32

And I even asked my brother I bet I was like in fourth grade and I asked my brother don't you think it's weird that dad always has a drink in his hand? And he did not want to. He's a year older than I. He did not want to address that. He said, don't say that. And we're a big Irish Catholic family. And so you know, even to this day, you know, people's perceptions become their reality and some don't want to focus on certain things, and that's fine.

Sandy Morrissey: 7:57

But I knew from a young age and as I got older and into college, I addressed the elephant in the room with my folks. But really my training began when I got a job at the hospital, at the Independence Center, and those counselors I mean really I had to admit to them. I think maybe I shouldn't work here because I'm relating an awful lot to what families are going through and they laughed and said you don't think we didn't see that, you just fit right in. And that really bothered me. At first I thought, what do you mean? I don't drink, I'm not. My journey began. My education in the field of addiction really began at that point and you know that old saying of you know you're only as sick as your secrets. It took me a long time to be very honest about coming from an alcoholic home and my belief is my dad did and my mom did, and that was well covered up. You know, in those past generations that was just something you didn't talk about, or or perhaps it wasn't identified.

Lyn Wineman: 9:06

Yeah, yeah, maybe we even seemed acceptable. We're not getting in trouble, we're not but wow, how perceptive you were as a child, and I think a lot of children are perceptive, and they're definitely watching the adults in their lives and learning from them, and I know that's part of your work too. So, since you touched on your personal story, I'd love to go into this deeper, because you know I've mentioned to you I think you should write a book someday. You have an amazing story of adventure and strength and resilience, and you know a mother and daughter's relationship. Would you be willing to share some of that with us today?

Sandy Morrissey: 9:54

Sure sure, you know, I think, growing up in a home that was very protective and strict, and me being somewhat of an empath at a young age, I really wanted to explore the world and you know I can remember being in my early 20s and people being in serious relationships and I was thinking I'm just not

even there yet. There's so much I want to do in my life. And then at about 25, I was doing family counseling. I became very aware that I wear my heart on my sleeve and it was very taxing for me.

Sandy Morrissey: 10:46

Yes, and so I decided to take off and go backpacking through Europe. Of course my mom was like no, you're not, I know. My dad was like I'll help you pack, and a friend that was supposed to go with me. She did not save her money like we had planned and I had, and we had planned for like a year and a half. So I took off at almost 27 years of age for to Europe on my own and it was a three-month trek and I had a ball and I met I'm pretty extroverted. So I met people from all over the world and got to travel with a young woman, Nishi, from Hong Kong, who worked in a sewing factory, and she saved and saved and she was going to travel for a year. Wow, and I thought, wow, but at that time and so I'm talking the late 80s, people were just impressed that I was American and I was staying longer than a week or two, and so I went in and out of hostels and had a year rail pass and my last week there I met and actually on that trip I began to think about wanting my own family and in particular, I think, my, my biological baby clock was ticking and I kept thinking you know, I really do want to have a baby.

Sandy Morrissey: 12:11

And I met Joseph and it was my last leg of the journey and I was in Germany and he was the conductor and he was a professional chef by trade and had studied several languages. So working on the trains was actually fun for him because he got to use the different languages, but he also got to travel free, and so we spent a whole morning. He kept coming in my train car and we'd talk about travels and we'd talk about food and we just realized we had a lot in common and so things progressed. I went home and we stayed in contact. He was calling pretty regularly, I mean like almost daily.

Lyn Wineman: 12:56

So he's still in Germany and you've gone back to the States. I just have to pause right here and tell you, Sandy, this story is actually like giving me like a thrill of excitement and heart palpitations thinking about you backpacking alone through Europe. So I just have to say that out loud. If you hear a thump, thump, thump, thump, that's my heart like going. Oh my gosh.

Sandy Morrissey: 13:18

You know, I really trusted my instincts. There's a rule of thumb when you're a traveler, it's if you're, if something tells you this isn't safe, trust it, get out, get away. And I did have one experience and that was with Nishi. We went into Rome. There were some, you know we I was much younger yeah, there were some aggressive men and I just my gut told, told me I just am not comfortable here with just the two of us. And we met some Australian guys. They were sitting by the Coliseum on the stairs. One of them said something to me and I just burst into tears and he goes what's wrong? And so I told him how frightened I was by just some of the aggressiveness. And they kind of took us under their wing. We went and had a beer and some pizza.

Sandy Morrissey: 14:09

And he said why don't you get on a train and get out of here? And I said exactly, and so I did, and she chose to stay. Oh wow, we met up. We met up later in our travels, but I felt really once I got out of there.

Lyn Wineman: 14:23

You felt good. Wow, good for you. Good for you. All right, I'm sorry I interrupted you. You were, you're back in the States and Yosef is in Germany and he's calling you pretty regularly. That all sounds innocent enough.

Sandy Morrissey: 14:40

Yes. So he decided to come over and lo and behold I just. We were both 28, 29, and he had never been married, and it just seemed right.

Sandy Morrissey: 14:54

My mom's of 100% Danish, so Danish descent, and my dad 100% Irish, and so we had some.

Sandy Morrissey: 15:02

There was a bit of European flair within our family. My mom's great aunt, or my great aunt and uncle, one from Denmark and I had met some family in Denmark when I went over on my my backpacking trip. So I went back with Joseph and it was just great for the first three or four months and I started to notice a change in his behavior and then I was pregnant. It sped things up just a little bit more, and so we had planned on waiting to do a wedding until my folks came over and maybe we had the baby, so we could kind of all do it at once, right, yeah? And then we decided to do a civil service wedding, so that would have been in June. But the German government got involved and here I was, a pregnant American woman and no insurance. And we weren't married yet and Joseph was just paying out of his pocket for my medical. They stamped in my passport you have till July it was the end of July to either get married or get out.

Lyn Wineman: 16:18

Wow. We don't think about having that kind of control over our lives, wow.

Sandy Morrissey: 16:26

Yeah, so well, that only grew. There's a lot with socialism that you know, I went into it naive and you learn quickly in terms of I'm not in the United States anymore and so we did. We got married and you know, really kind of started to set some things up and family did a mail shower for me so we got baby gifts through the mail, that kind of thing, and yet I could see Joseph was stressed. And you know what I do know about mental health now I probably was not aware of then in the sense of how things at that age, between 20 to 30, if there are mental health concerns, they can really kind of rise to the surface.

Lyn Wineman: 17:15

That's the time Okay, and I suppose, as stress and responsibility and these life changes happen, that's probably got something to do with it. Yes or no?

Sandy Morrissey: 17:27

I think that kind of triggered right yeah, Because that's what I was thinking it was. There was just a lot of change and I was telling him I could work and I even had met a couple families that were saying, oh my goodness, if you can teach my children English, and they would say Americanish, that's what we'd want. They didn't want English proper, like from you know, Great Britain, they wanted Americanish. And I was thrilled I thought, oh sure, absolutely. Well, the control issues became more and more and I did talk him into some counseling. You know it's interesting, I never saw Joseph drink hardly at all and yet when he did, it was, it was like he couldn't control and I thought and it's not uncommon from alcoholic homes to fall into that again, even with everything you know, yeah, to fall into that again, even with everything you know.

Sandy Morrissey: 18:27

There were certain characteristics that were really incredible about him. He was bright and artistic and in the counseling it became evident he had some issues and I think, as many of us that have lived in alcoholic homes, I think that goes back to his childhood, I mean, when he started being a little bit honest or exposing some of those family secrets. His folks were great and he had great brother and sister, but he had an uncle and from what I can gather, I think Joseph was abused by this man and it was never addressed and at that time, in the late 80s, counseling and oh my gosh gender issues were not allowed.

Sandy Morrissey: 19:19

Yeah, yes, so you know I talked about how socialism became a very interesting barrier in my life and the doctors at the hospital that I was going to have my daughter at were wonderful and that kind of became my haven of sanity, because Joseph's behavior was so up and down and he would go to counseling and then not go. So when it came time to have my daughter, you know I'm in the hospital and Joseph really struggled with me being there and feeling out of control and so I had Jean Marie. We named her after my mom and actually I'm in my hospital bed and the some government officials came in and said I couldn't name her that, that it was a French man's name and I needed to choose from a German book of names.

Lyn Wineman: 20:29

Oh, my goodness, that almost seems unthinkable, that you can't name your baby what you want to name your baby, yeah,

Sandy Morrissey: 20:40

I was at Heilig Geist, Holy Ghost Hospital, the nurse that really supported me. I think she was as curious about me as I was about all of them. And she got red in the face and she's talking to these German officials and she's blah, blah, blah and I'm thinking, oh my gosh, don't make it worse. And she turned to me and she was flushed in the face and she said Sandy, add an N-E to Jean J-E-A-N-N-E, so it's Jeanne Murray, and then they'll allow it. And so that's the direction I went.

Sandy Morrissey: 21:20

But then I got paranoid. I really was quite suspicious that oh, my goodness, what else is going to pop up that I don't know about. And I mentioned Joseph feeling out of control and when he came in the hospital he was not friendly to the staff who were doing such a nice job taking care of me. And you know the hospital were so kind. They said we are going to tell him you need rest and we don't know what's going on with him. And I tried to. I tried to soften that a bit because I didn't. I was a little scared at that point.

Lyn Wineman: 22:03

I mean the fact that they could see it meant it was beyond something that was quietly happening in the background. It was more openly happening.

Sandy Morrissey: 22:47

Yeah, and the reason I started worrying about that is at that time in Germany the population was dying and they were actually doing a huge prevention campaign for people that particularly young people being sexual, that if they or young couples that they would pay a stipend to the parents as well as the baby, the newborn, for the parents would get the stipend for a couple years in the baby up to age 16. Wow, Because they were wanting to grow the population again. And I kept thinking, wow, you know, this is socialized and this baby's half American and half German, and so I, you know, I really started thinking in terms of what are my next steps? What is going to happen to us? And Joseph's parents were very kind, but I could see they were concerned about him too, so I knew it wasn't just me. By the time I got out of the hospital and back to the apartment with Joseph the entire apartment.

Sandy Morrissey: 24:24

Well, he didn't do any dishes for the two weeks that I was in the hospital, which which was not even characteristic of him.

Sandy Morrissey: 24:36

I mean he like things picked up as much as I did and things were out of the closet and all that. And I looked at him and he said, well, you're home now and it's just time you get busy. And I thought, oh, I just, we just had our baby. So when I talked to him about it and just said, Joseph, what happened, and I could tell he felt bad, but I know he felt out of control.

Sandy Morrissey: 25:08

And so my journey began in terms of how am I going to get out of this at this point until he gets the help he needs. And I knew in my heart, if he really dealt with his issues and got the help he needed, he would come over to the States to get us. And I planned my leave. I had a neighbor who helped me. I had shared, confided in her and she was really upset with Joseph and his behaviors and they had had some arguments. He did not like her being around and in fact she helped me set up a bank account for Jeanne Marie because she was getting that stipend. Oh yeah, he said that is hers, she will have that till age 16.

And I felt kind of bad doing that behind Joseph's back. But she said this has nothing, they wouldn't. The government would want her to have and her husband worked for the government.

Lyn Wineman: 26:17

So she knew and she was watching out for you.

Sandy Morrissey: 26:21

Yeah, and Jeanne Marie, and so she and a friend helped us to get to the train station. My folks were concerned. I finally informed them and said I'm coming home. And my dad said, oh no, you're not. You work out your marriage. And I said, dad, you know me better. I mean I just don't quit at stuff. And I said you know me better than that. It's just not safe right now. I mean it's the healthiest thing for the baby and I is to come home. So anyway, it took a bit and I was afraid when we got on the plane that well, actually, when I went to the embassy to get her passport, we were told, because I had taken copies of her birth certificate and stuff, he said we need the originals and I thought, oh Lord, because we had to travel to get her passport. Yeah, my folks were concerned enough they one of my sisters came over, they were concerned maybe it was just postpartum and then realized no.

Sandy Morrissey: 27:54

Yeah, e met with me and I told him just what I've told you and he approved for us to get the passport. It was like the my angels were looking over me. Yeah, we got it and we got on the plane and he said you do realize, if they stop you, your daughter won't leave Germany until she's at least of legal adult age. You could leave anytime you want, but if they stop you adult age, you could leave anytime you want, but if they stop you. So you know, there's just some things in confidence that you have to be careful with, with what?

Sandy Morrissey: 28:34

But I was encouraged, you know, get him to go a different direction, have him looking for you, not from Luxembourg, which was a small, small airport very similar to Lincoln. Yeah, yeah, but another direction. And so I sent him the direction of Denmark, where I had family, and so he was looking there as we were on the plane.

Sandy Morrissey: 29:00

I will. I will tell you. You know it's. It was a very scary process and very sad. It actually took me about two years to even be able to really tell the story. Oh, my goodness, yeah, because it was so painful. And you know, I wasn't home long and my dad said to me you know, if you think I think he's responsible for all of this, you're wrong. It takes two, and the sooner you figure out your part in it, the sooner you'll get on with your life. And at first I was, so I thought what's he talking? I tried to help him. You know I found the therapist. You know I really tried to support him. As you know, I found the therapist. You know I really tried to support him as he worked through some things and it took me a couple weeks and it just haunted me. Yea

Lyn Wineman: 29:54

I can only imagine, because words from your father are very you know, they go deep, they can go deep, yeah.

Sandy Morrissey: 30:03

Yeah, and then it occurred to me I moved really quickly into that. You know, I think we both felt we were in our late 20s. You know, I had dated a lot in my younger years and he was the first one that I really felt like, wow, we've got some things in common and very similar where we saw ourselves down the road. But it all did happen very fast. It was very romantic, it was very, you know, and, yeah, I think I moved too fast, I loved too much too soon and, yeah, my part was having to really take a serious look at that. You know it's funny, Lyn. I, growing up in an Irish Catholic home, I took all the sacraments.

Lyn Wineman: 30:54

Oh, yes, right yes.

Sandy Morrissey: 30:57

Yeah, and to this day really. You know people have asked me why haven't you remarried? And you know I've dated but marriage to me is really sacred and you know when it feels like a failure.

Lyn Wineman: 31:17

Yeah, I hear that. But, gosh, you kept yourself and your daughter safe and there's no way that that could be a failure. But coming from I didn't come from a Catholic background but I came from a Lutheran background that kind of has similar, very strong beliefs in right and wrong and sacraments. And there's a lot of guilt involved and shame involved in doing what you were raised to know as wrong or against that teaching. So I so appreciate you sharing the story and I still believe, hearing it now again. I still believe it should be a movie, a series, like how do we pitch this? Maybe somebody will hear this on the podcast and go, Sandy, let's make that movie. But tell me then you got back to the states, is everything good? You and Jeanne

Sandy Morrissey: 32:20

I wish we kept Jeanne Marie, but you know that's hard. Americans were like what? Oh, Jeanne Marie.

Sandy Morrissey: 32:36

To come full circle, you know she was nine years old and we were celebrating her birthday. We do a big family birthday, but it was just her and my time for her birthday and she loved at that time, Chinese food was her go-to and we were sitting there and I said okay, what's your birthday wish? And she said I have three this year. And I said okay, and she said can we go shopping after this? And I said yes, and she said can we call my daddy after this? And I thought oh, wow, and I've always been honest, I've never lied to her about the situation, but age, appropriate in my opinion, is what she could know. And the third thing was she wanted to know how the sperm met the egg, Because she was an animal. She was an animal planet kid.

Lyn Wineman: 33:32

I don't know which of those questions is hardest to answer. The going shopping. That's the easy part, oh my goodness. So did they ever meet, did Josep?

Sandy Morrissey: 33:44

Yes, so we called him and it kind of began at that point. It wasn't until she was 12 that you know there was more phone calls because she could not. When she heard his strong accent she was very aware oh, this guy isn't like just in another state.

Lyn Wineman: 34:03

Yeah.

Sandy Morrissey: 34:04

It wasn't that he was, and then I promised her that if he didn't come over by age 16, I would take her over. So, sure enough, at 16, we went back and his parents, his own well, Jim Ray's Oma and Opa were wonderful to us, and her cousin, Marco and Claudia, and Udo and Hadwisch, and you know, they were all just wonderful and Joseph was not doing them and he was. He was in a new relationship and they had a couple kids at that point and he now has five kids. That's a lot of kids. That's a lot of kids and still seems to struggle. So she has, she has learned. You know, I think in her early 20s she really struggled with his behavior and I talked to her a lot about mental health. So isn't it interesting how it's come full circle?

Lyn Wineman: 35:00

Yeah, I know.

Sandy Morrissey: 35:02

And really kind of talked to her about that whole behavioral health piece and it wasn't really till probably her mid 20s where she really started grasping that. Yeah, this is a pattern, because there are times he can be absolutely delightful and then he can just be you just think who are you? What's happening? So you know I so worried about her relationships with men and you know I think some of what I missed out with my dad's alcoholism was having that close bond.

Sandy Morrissey: 35:37

You know, when somebody is attached to that, socializing to feed their addiction and then coming home from a stressful day at work and just sitting there and drinking, you know you don't have, what we had with our mom was very different and fortunately, after my mom passed, we, Jeanne Marie and I, got with my dad. Yeah, he had stopped drinking about 20 years before he passed and but we had really got close, very tight. But I think you know I was affected by that loss of male figure, and then she was too, which you know,

Sandy Morrissey: 36:56

Well, I think everything. I, I am one that I think things happen for a reason I really strongly believe. What do you learn? And I know I'm a strong woman, I know that I am resilient and I know that I know what I lived. Regardless of what other people may have thought, judgments made or assumptions made, or you know, everybody has a story. Yeah, and if anyone would have told me that would have been mine, I would have said, ah, I think we're dreaming. But you know we all do, and I think if we would take the time to listen and allow people to let their story unfold, we'd be a lot more accepting and a lot more willing to support.

Lyn Wineman: 37:49

I love that. Yeah, so, sandy, taking that a step further, how did all of this impact the work you're doing in prevention today?

Sandy Morrissey: 38:11

Well, this is even a weirder connection. So you know, I had told you I worked in treatment, yes, and then when I went to so I had my certification in back then it was an alcoholism counselor. Now it's a LADAC. But when I went to Germany, all that lapsed. Now it's a LADAC, but when I went to Germany, all that lapsed. And so when I came back there were people in Lincoln because I went to the university here and just really had quite a network and really supported me and tried to get me jobs. But my thing had expired and it was just difficult. And I said, you know, with a little one right now I'm not willing to do all those classes. And so, long story short, I had gotten a friend got me a job at Lincoln Council and I was doing alcohol evaluations and LADAC was signing off. So it was a good fit off. And my dad, my mom, passed away so little

Sandy Morrissey: 39:18

And here I am in a five year period I lost both my parents and my marriage was a two year international divorce thing. And I was doing those evals and my dad said, you know, I met somebody in Lincoln and she does prevention for this. He said it's tobacco prevention, but he had also worked with a food brokerage company in earlier years and they asked him to be the president of this board here in Lincoln and that's how he had met her. She was on to talk about prevention in stores, right yeah, and he said I can just see you doing that. And I was like, yeah, yeah, yeah, what? Yeah, well, maybe dad, maybe, no, here's her number. I told her you'd call her and so you know I did. She kind of talked to me about what she did on a state level and I thought it was interesting. But then there at Lincoln Council, Linda Major, who did a lot through the university.

Sandy Morrissey: 40:31

Yes, she was getting ready to leave and she said, Sandy, I think you should do prevention. And so there it was, and here I am.

Lyn Wineman: 40:41

Wow, wow. All right, Sandy, I'm going to bring this full circle because I want to think a little bit about prevention, like can you just help us explain how important it is, either as a local community or even as a

larger global community, to support prevention, like, how important is that? What are the outcomes of supporting prevention?

Sandy Morrissey: 41:08

You know, I don't know anyone that really doesn't support prevention. I think it's a matter of engaging and getting involved, yeah, and so it. That could be on a smaller level, you know, within your home or within your school or with your friends, but we have kind of a rule here. You know, we've got great parents that are the silent majority is what we call them because they don't want their kids bullied, they don't want to set some standards and their kid be ostracized or left out or, and it's a very small percentage of the dysfunction, you know, compared to the parents that really care. But what we've done, instead of taking the time to really have those discussions, talk as a family. It's let's stay busy, busy. We haven't busy and they're doing things, they're in activities and/ or using technology as a babysitter when kids are little, when it makes them happy, it calms them down, it gives me a little bit of time. You know we've gotten so busy in our society and so, really, prevention is not rocket science, but it's really about getting back down to the basics.

Sandy Morrissey: 42:33

Does everybody need to be involved in so many activities? How can we lighten the load? You know, what are your family priorities. What are your values? Are you living within them? Everybody should have a healthy plan. Am I living within my value system for what I want my health to look like?

Lyn Wineman: 42:53

Yeah, we all have those choices. We all have those choices, but yet it is so easy to fall into that trap of saying yes to everything, getting so busy with everything and then avoiding the real work or the real conversation or even just the rest and the downtime that you need as a person or as a family.

Sandy Morrissey: 43:20

Yeah, you get it. That's it in a nutshell.

Lyn Wineman: 43:23

Wow. Well, Sandy, I do want to ask this next question for our listeners, who maybe would like to learn more about the work that you're doing in prevention how can they connect with Region V or some of your projects to see that work or engage with that work?

Sandy Morrissey: 43:45

Oh, absolutely so. We have our Region V website that people can go to and it does show all the free trainings, whether it's mental health, first aid, wanting information on grants available through our opioid resettlement funds. But you can find out everything about our organization on that site, and yet an even better site well, I shouldn't say better, is Talk Heart 2 Heart.

Lyn Wineman: 44:17

Oh, I love that site. Talk Heart 2 Heart.

Sandy Morrissey: 44:20

Yes, we can't thank KidGlov, our partner in the crime. We can't thank you enough. We had identified, really, parents weren't coming to trainings. The few that did were actually parents that were pretty active and so we thought let's try to reach them where they're at and so we can tell through the analytics people are getting on. We've got blogs, we've got videos of hope and then we've got the trauma videos, one of the most recent that I'm just so thrilled with. That without you guys, the professionalism you brought to it, so we may have made you preventionists, but on a marketing level we have learned so much from you and want to only see that expanding, grow, and you know there's projects on there that it reaches the family. You know we've got different pieces that individuals can go to and utilize within their community as tools. So we're so thrilled. Those would be two pieces. And then we have coalitions throughout each of the 16 counties and coalition leadership that really drives within each of the individual 16 counties in Southeast Nebraska, so Lancaster and the surrounding 15 rural.

Lyn Wineman: 45:38

Well, we'll make sure to have those two websites the Region V website and Talk Heart 2 Heart linked up in the show notes on the KidGlov website, so if anybody wants to link into them, they'll be there. So all right, Sandy, I'm going to put you on the hot seat now. I'm sure it feels like you've already been on the hot seat with me asking you all of these questions, but I am inspired by motivational quotes and I get to talk to so many interesting people on the podcast. I'm wondering if you could give us a few original Sandy Morrissey words of wisdom for our listeners.

Sandy Morrissey: 46:14

My mantra, probably in the last 10 years with on a family level with my daughter and I, is keep moving forward. Be kinder, be more gentler with yourself and others and just keep moving forward and things will show themselves. You'll know your next steps.

Lyn Wineman: 46:36

I love that. Such great advice. Move forward, be kinder and gentler, and things will show themselves. I love that so much. We're human beings, not human doings. That's one that comes to mind for me that goes along with what you've just said. Sandy. I always love talking with you as we wrap up this great conversation. What is the most important thing you would like our listeners to remember about the work that you're doing?

Sandy Morrissey: 47:07

That the importance is so there there's genetics involved as well as environmental that affects our mental health and substance use and to really engage, be involved in how can we take care of some things before it turns into a problem. So it goes back to what you said, Lyn. You know it's all about choices and the sooner we address issues, the easier it is to take care of them, and when it gets harder, it's probably because we've waited a longer time, and we see that a lot in prevention. You know

windows of opportunity where people reach out, but they're to the point of crisis or concern. So, yeah, reach out, get involved and help us reduce that stigma.

Lyn Wineman: 48:05

That's amazing, Sandy. I have so loved this conversation and I fully believe the world needs more people like you. Thank you for the great work that you're doing and thank you for talking with us today.

Sandy Morrissey: 48:20

Oh, Lyn, thank you. I love spending time with you too, so thank you.

Announcer: 48:26

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from. Visit kidglov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch, as always. If you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe and share. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next time.