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## HISTORY & MISSION

Walk-In Counseling Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that was founded in 1969 by a group of young psychologists as a radical approach to addressing the unmet need for accessible mental health services in the Twin Cities. **Our mission is to provide free, anonymous, easily accessible mental health counseling to people who have urgent needs and few service options.** We help people stabilize during a time of crisis and resolve problems before they become so severe they require expensive hospitalization or police involvement, or result in tragedy or major life changes. Our services help people cope and function more effectively in their families, jobs, school and community. Walk-In is as relevant today as it was in 1969. What a vision those founders had!

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## PROGRAMS & SERVICES--2017

### *Mental Health Counseling*

**We operate free walk-in counseling clinics** at our original Minneapolis location and in St. Paul through partnerships with Family Tree Clinic and Neighborhood House.

People come to Walk-In Counseling Center for help with:

depression and anxiety	grief and loss	undiagnosed mental illness
suicidal ideation	bullying and school problems	drug and alcohol abuse
trauma and abuse	concern about a loved one	job loss and unemployment
relationship issues	relationship issues	LGBTQ issues

During walk-in clinic hours, clients are seen without an appointment. Counselors meet privately with clients to discuss their presenting problems, and identify and provide the most appropriate services, which may include: future appointments for brief treatment counseling at Walk-In, crisis intervention, or referrals and connection to another agency for more appropriate services or for related needs (e.g., safe housing, basic needs assistance, chemical dependency treatment, employment, etc.).

Demographics of clients served in 2017:

- 36% were non-Caucasian
- 57% women, 41% men, 2% transgender
- 41% had household incomes under \$30,000
- 30% single person households; 70% multi-person households including families with children
- 2% were under age 18; 73% between 18-39; 25% over 40
- The reasons for not having or using insurance (e.g., at a traditional clinic) were: waits too long for an appointment; can't afford deductibles + premiums + copays; need to remain anonymous; youth can't/won't use family insurance; problem does not qualify for the "mental health" diagnosis required for insurance; stigma of having mental health counseling on their health record.

In 2017, **approximately 165 people volunteered for Walk-In.** Volunteer counselors (master degree and doctoral clinicians and advanced graduate students) **served 2,648 clients in 6,853 free counseling sessions.** They **donated approximately 18,000 service hours (e.g. counseling, case consultation, outreach, and administrative assistance) valued at \$1,115,000.** The contribution of our volunteers over the past 48+ years is estimated at more than **\$25 million.**

## *Training and Support of Volunteers*

Although our volunteers are highly skilled professionals, **ongoing training provided by Walk-In ensures they have the knowledge of and use best practices with our diverse clientele.** We provide quarterly trainings for volunteers and representatives of sister agencies on such topics as: couples/relationship counseling, sexual assault, risk of harm to self or others, documentation and goal-setting, models/methods of assessment and interventions, working with sexual offenders, co-occurring mental health and chemical abuse, transgender issues, and single session therapy.

## *Consultation and Training for Professionals*

During our 48+ years Walk-In has been a helping a resource for other clinicians and social service organizations. Gary Schoener, previously our executive director from 1972 - 2010, directs our Consultation & Training Institute. He is internationally known for his expertise in professional boundaries, ethics, professional misconduct, and other difficult organizational issues. He has provided consultation, training and coaching on these topics for many years. Profits generated by these fee-based services help support our free counseling services.

## **IMPACT**

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We believe that when individuals get the help they need to deal with life's challenges they "do better": they are more likely able to get and maintain employment, refrain from illegal activity, resolve drug/alcohol issues, maintain housing, support their children, and have healthier relationships. When individuals do better, so do their families and communities.

### **Our 2017 client survey revealed that:**

- 99% were satisfied with the services
- 100% would refer a friend or loved one to Walk-In
- 90% felt more hopeful as a result of coming to Walk-In
- 44% came because they were referred by family/friend/someone who has been here

### **Clients tell us:**

*Walk-In is . . . truly amazing, life affirming, and life transforming.*

*I walk out of here every time with a smile on my face feeling like someone actually cared. . . It really encourages me.*

*I hope you know how great an impact you're making in this community.*

*As a person who is broke and suffering from depression, this has given me a light at the end of the tunnel.*

*This place has changed my life. It has helped me grow and given me strength to stand up to life's challenges. I am ever so grateful for your services.*

*This is a fabulous resource for low income people...I can't thank you enough!*

*(Walk-In) saved my life in 1983. I've always wanted to tell that to someone;*

*Any many more. . .*

**To our knowledge, back in 1969, Walk-In was the first or second such walk-in counseling service in the world.** Today we are a primary safety-net service, and we will continue to be badly needed in 2018 and beyond.

In a survey of referring agencies, **100% of respondents said our services effectively address gaps in the mental health service system; 97% say free services and access without appointments are important or extremely important for clients.** One provider said, "Walk-In is absolutely critical to filling the gap in mental health access...and there is no one else doing what Walk-In is doing."