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OVERVIEW 2020

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!

PROGRAMS & SERVICES--2020

Mental Health Counseling

We operate free counseling clinics, and, like many other providers, during most of 2020 they were remote via Zoom.

People come to our clinics for help with:

depression and anxiety
suicidal ideation
trauma and abuse

grief and loss
bullying and school problems
concern about a loved one
relationship issues

undiagnosed mental illness
drug and alcohol abuse
job loss and unemployment
LGBTQ issues

In March 2020, we adapted to the pandemic by switching all services from in-person to a call-in/log-in format using Zoom. During clinic hours, clients are “seen” (by phone or computer login) 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, crisis intervention directions, 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 2020:

- 40% were non-white
- 59% women, 37% men, 4% transgender or other.
- 76% were between the ages of between 18-40; 3% were under age 18; 22% over 40
- A number could not use their insurance because of long waits for an appointment, their hesitance to seek “mental health” services; and not wanting a diagnosis on their health record.

In 2020, **approximately 135 people volunteered at Walk-In.** Volunteer counselors (master degree and doctoral clinicians and advanced graduate students), team consultants and receptionists **served approximately 1,500 clients in 3,000 free counseling sessions.** The contribution of our volunteers totaled 13,000 hours valued at \$1,100,000. Over the past 51 years the value of their contributions is estimated at more than **\$29 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, confidentiality, mindfulness, models/methods of assessment and interventions, co-occurring mental health and chemical abuse, transgender issues, and single session therapy.

Consultation and Training for Professionals

During our 50 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.

IMPACT

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.

Though smaller in number of responses than in 2019, our 2020 client survey revealed very similar information:

- 100% were satisfied with the services (95% in 2019)
- 100% would refer a friend or loved one to Walk-In (99% in 2019)
- 96% felt more hopeful as a result of coming to Walk-In (87% in 2019)
- 64% (up from 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 the only such service in the world that is staffed entirely by volunteers.

In a survey of referring agencies, **100% of respondents said our services effectively address gaps in the mental health service system; 97% said 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.*"

Walk-In is a *primary* safety-net service, and we will continue to be badly needed in 2021 and beyond.