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OVERVIEW 2022

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. **We 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. All services are provided by volunteers: clinicians, lay people from the community, and students from local Universities. Walk-In is as relevant today as it was in 1969. What a vision those founders had!

PROGRAMS & SERVICES--2022

Mental Health Counseling

We operate free counseling clinics that were, despite our name, remote via Zoom during all of 2022.

People come 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

During clinic hours, clients were “seen” (by phone or computer login) without an appointment. Counselors met privately in Zoom “breakout rooms” with clients to discuss presenting problems, identify, and provide the most appropriate services. These included: future appointments for brief treatment counseling, direction for crisis intervention, affirmations and support, 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.). Clients who request it are also seen via appointments for “brief treatment” for several (up to about 12) sessions.

Demographics of the 1,400 individual clients served in 2022:

- 49% were non-white (when race was identified)
- 58% women, 36% men, 6% other identification or unknown
- 73% were between the ages of 18-40; 2% were under age 18; 25% 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 2022, **102 people volunteered at Walk-In.** Clinically trained volunteer counselors, team consultants and lay receptionists **served over 1,420 clients in 3,100 free counseling sessions.** The contribution of our volunteers totaled **11,553 hours** valued at **\$988,898.** Over the past 53 years. the value of their contributions is estimated at more than **\$31 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: trauma, 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, and single session therapy.

Consultation and Training for Professionals

During our 53 years Walk-In has been a helping a resource for other clinicians and social service organizations. Gary Schoener 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.

Since we went virtual in early 2020, our client satisfaction survey depends on the extra effort clients make to go to our website to complete it. Unfortunately, many fewer did so than when we were in person and could hand the client a survey (typically at least 100 per year). Since 2020, our client satisfaction survey was completed by only 77 clients. It revealed that:

- 84% were satisfied with the services (95% in 2019)
- 85% would refer a friend or loved one to Walk-In (99% in 2019)
- 77% felt more hopeful as a result of coming to Walk-In (87% in 2019)
- 59% came because they were referred by someone who has been here or knew about us
- Clients came primarily because counselors are mental health professionals, services are free, and no appointments are needed.

These statistics are lower than in past years and may indicate that fewer clients did make the extra effort to go to our website to complete the survey, and perhaps more people who were not as satisfied (we do have to counsel some people not to use Walk-In inappropriately, which can make them angry) did so. Comments we receive on social media and those made directly to counselors paint a different story of client satisfaction. Nevertheless, we are paying attention!

Clients tell us:

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

A true god send for me. I wasn't able to keep going alone anymore.

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.

I am literally telling everyone. . . I'm screaming it to the world

I've had many therapy sessions in the past, yet I had never experienced anything anywhere near as potent as this approach. . . no nonsense feedback was WONDERFUL!

Any many more. . .

And special thanks to our volunteers: 94% said their experience as a volunteer was outstanding or very good.

And to referring agencies: In a survey of referring agencies in the mid-2010's, 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.*"

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.

Walk-In is a *primary* safety-net service, and we will continue to be badly needed in 2023 and beyond.