# Southern St. Louis County LAC

## Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2022

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| Present: | Justin England-Sullivan, Kathy Wilson, Rochelle Koehne, Roger Raymond Jr., Sonja Wildwood\*, Taylor Soghigian, Rachel Kot\*\*  \*- Facilitator  \*\*- Guest |
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1. Welcome and check-in
2. CMH Report-back, SIM planning, other business

* Sonja reported on the ABHI Children’s Mental Health Summit held virtually on February 16, 2022. The summit was organized/formed in response to the CMH crisis nation-wide (AAP declaration, Surgeon General’s report, MN DHS Children’s Summit, and regional ABHI Children’s Cabinet).
  + The summit objective was to look at gaps in services & organize a framework of response
  + A wide range of folks were brought together (teachers, family members, providers, tribal & county staff, elected officials) to provide perspectives & organize a response
  + Sonja noted the summit discussion & objectives are very much aligned with the work of the LAC. More information can be found at <abhimn.org/children>
  + Sonja is planning on further involvement
  + Related to this, Deanna brought up recent county discussions regarding the importance of hearing the youth voice in our LAC, being mindful of doing so respectfully & in a non-exploitative manner. The county would be exploring gathering a group of youth (age range up to 24 years or so) to advise them and is looking for feedback from the LAC regarding this. Meeting attendees agreed on the importance of hearing from the youth voice; Sonja will be bringing it up to the children’s sub-committee, as well, for input. Rachel Kot indicated she knows of a 16-year-old who may be a good candidate for the youth voice council; Taylor S. may know of resources also.
* SIM planning (Sequential Intercept Model) – Sonja is looking for volunteers to work with this. Brief discussion re SIM mapping, it maps for points of interaction between individuals with mental health/substance use issues and law enforcement/criminal justice system within a community, identifying gaps, resources, and developing local action plans focused on services or treatment. Anyone interested please email Sonja.
* Other business – Nathan recently resigned his position on the LAC. Question was raised as to whether his position should be filled right away or wait. Members in attendance agreed that sooner rather than later would be ideal. Nathan is an educator, and it was suggested that that perspective be considered when reviewing applicants. Sonja & Justin will bring to the Membership sub-committee.
* Meeting time – some discussion amongst members present as to meeting time preference and whether the 4:30-6:00PM time is working for folks. Sonja will be setting up a Google poll.

1. Rachel Kot, Peer Support Specialist HDC & Harmony Center

* Rachel works for HDC, started as ARMHS worker, then trained to be a Peer Support Specialist. She now does both in addition to running the Harmony Center.
* Harmony Center (previously Harmony Club) is funded by a grant which stipulates it be run by certified Peer Support Specialists. It is a social club, run by HDC but located in the Damiano Center. HC is open MWF 12:00-3:00PM and is a come-as-you-are, bring-what-inspires-you, safe space free of judgement. The focus is on hope, a positive environment, resiliency, strengths, and a feeling of community. Coffee & tea are provided, there is space for & access to musical instruments, space for puzzles & games, drawing materials, tables & comfy chairs. Peer Support staff are mindful of the language they use & the space they are creating. HC is open to all (don’t have to be receiving HDC services).
* A Harmony Center flyer is available, Rachel will be sending to LAC South members.

1. Gathering information and experiences from our community brainstorm (2022 Focus)

* Members agreed at the last meeting that our 2022 focus should be on hearing from those with lived experience trying to access mental health services - how that’s gone, what barriers are encountered, and using that feedback to suggest ways to improve resources & access in our community. How do we see that happening? How do we hear from our community?
* Anonymous survey idea – Facebook or other social platform
* Include in survey “How do you want your voice heard?”
* Kathy writes surveys as a part of her job and volunteered her expertise in this area
* Purpose is important: LAC exists to identify gaps & barriers to mental health services in our community
* Multiple members stressed the importance of getting stories/narratives to add to pure objectives to make LAC recommendations more people-centered & to demonstrate more effectively what the gaps/barriers look like. The power of a story.
* May want to have both online and paper survey options
* Be mindful that some folks may only be willing to talk about these issues with a professional
* Would be good to tap into the experiences of individuals seeking out services as well as talking with professionals w/regards to gaps & barriers encountered when looking for mental health services
* Wording of the questions will be extremely important
* Example of LEAN Duluth ReWrite model, which provides individuals the opportunity to create a public record of interactions with law enforcement agencies, to speak about their experiences and be heard. Stories are submitted by writing (handwritten & submitted or submitted online), submitting a video, or calling & leaving a voice message.
* Taylor knows some folks who may be willing to share their stories
* Recommendation made that a work group be formed. Rochelle, Taylor, and Sonja expressed interest in being a part of this work group.

**5. Check-out and action items for next meeting**

Action Items:

* Children/Youth Mental Health sub-committee to discuss further exploration of gathering a group of youth to advise us & let SLC/Deanna know of any ideas/decisions
* Members willing to be a part of SIM mapping/planning should email Sonja
* Membership sub-committee will begin process of new member selection to fill vacancy left by Nathan G.
* Sonja will set up a Google survey regarding preferred meeting time, members to complete survey upon hearing from Sonja
* Re 2022 Focus, members to consider where in their network there may be stories waiting to be told, and continue generating ideas as to how we best survey the stories & experiences of folks seeking mental health services in our community
* Members willing to be a part of the community survey work group should email the co-chairs indicating their interest

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:20**

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| **Next meeting:** | **March 17, 2022**  **5:00pm-6:30pm** |