# Southern St. Louis County LAC

## Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2022

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| Present: | Bert Brandt, Carly Hiti\*, Ina Newton, Jacquelyn Hanson-Hietala, Justin England-Sullivan, Kathy Wilson, Liz Strohmayer, Mick Vue, Rochelle Koehne, Sonja Wildwood\*, Taylor Soghigian\*- Facilitator |
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1. Welcome and check-in, new members
* Introduction of elected co-chairs, Carly Hiti and Sonja Wildwood, and new LAC members Rochelle Koehne, Taylor Soghigian, Kathy Wilson, and Mick Vue. New county liaison is Deanna Torfin.
* Scheduled guest speaker for tonight, Rachel Kot, was unable to join us for this month’s meeting; she will be added to the February agenda. Rachel is a peer support specialist & Harmony Club facilitator.
* Time was spent with member introductions and a synopsis of how LAC South meeting are generally run, for the benefit of new members.
* Brief recap of November meeting: committee agreement to change monthly meeting times from 4:30pm-6:00pm to 5:00pm-6:30pm; presentation by Blair Powless from the Duluth Community Safety Initiative; vote to adjust bylaws to say members will serve two-to-three-year terms based on member preference; member openings & recruitment; and discussion around elevator speeches/how we present our LAC role to the community.
1. Engagement conversation
* Members were asked to think about what their preference is related to individual terms (two- or three-year terms) and let co-chairs know their preference.
* Engagement is what we make it, both individually and as a group.
* Baseline expectation for members is meeting attendance; level of engagement beyond that is an individual decision.
* Discussed sub-committee idea. If members are interested & subcommittees are developed, there may be a need to communicate/meet between monthly meetings. Existing subcommittee is the Membership Committee (Justin & Carly) which was established, and new members have been recruited & selected.
* Additional sub-committee ideas/suggestions have included:
	+ Community Engagement/Awareness/Resources sub-committee (Carly & Bert previously expressed interest) which would emphasize increased activity & engagement in the community, making sure folks are aware of the mental health resources available in our community
	+ Child Mental Health sub-committee and Adult Mental Health sub-committee
	+ Sub-committee dedicated to creation of visual representation of LAC activities/focus/accomplishments
	+ Sub-committee focused on development of resource hub (Nathan & Liz previously expressed interest)
* In discussion, members spoke positively regarding the model of working in subcommittees, with the caveat of the need for self-selection as to how much each individual can put in. Don’t want to lose membership if people feel they are unable to be a part of a sub-committee at any point in time. Co-chairs emphasized membership would never require sub-committee participation.
* Member suggestion that this next year focus with more emphasis on actions; sub-committees could work on actions & then report back to the group.
* Acknowledgement that sub-committees will come & go related to the work that needs to be done; caution against too many sub-committees, emphasizing the need to keep focus.
* Suggestion of concept of working groups for specific goals, with possible option of splitting up regular monthly meetings to include sub-committee discussions during meeting time.
* Suggestion that it would be helpful to have specific action steps of identified sub-committees
* Recommendation that sub-committees or the larger group contact Deb Holman, Street Outreach worker for CHUM. Deb is seen as an amazing resource – she had a huge role in forming the Community Intervention Group (CIG). Discussion re significant need for better access to culturally competent & trauma-informed services/help for individuals in our community who are generating the most 911 calls. Deb may be a good guest speaker for one of our meetings.
* Co-chairs requested that members email Sonja or Carly to let them know which sub-committee they are interested in being a part of, if any.
1. Area of focus for 2022 report
* Discussion opened with conversation surrounding the question ‘who are we here to serve?’, and from that, what should our focus be for 2022?
	+ Availability of services/help to individuals experiencing homelessness and domestic abuse
	+ Serving our entire St. Louis County community, as serving those in need impacts the entire community
	+ Availability of services for individuals with severe mental illness. We’ve shifted away from serving those who most desperately need the help. Placement resources are dwindling
	+ Would like to see more community outreach before people end up hospitalized; avoid hospitalization by making resources available earlier/in a timely manner
	+ Many with severe mental health issues are not being served. Need for crisis line/crisis response that is not law enforcement. Need better mental health training for law enforcement/first responders/direct service staff.
	+ Need to focus on action steps; talk is good but need action
	+ When the root of mental health issues is a basic needs issue, cannot address mental health without addressing basic needs. What services do we have and how can we improve these? Agree law enforcement needs mental health training
	+ recap of areas identified as needing focus including: hearing more from folks with lived experience about what the barriers are & how we can address those; development of community resource hub/Resourceful; student/youth mental health during these covid times; community engagement to increase awareness that systems currently in place need improvement/funding; address crisis response issues; gender/sexuality/race issues & how they impact lived experience; a quality improvement & quality control approach to crisis response: improving current crisis response, looking at options for possible stipends for training direct service staff, informing people about services available and making sure those services are what they are supposed to be in the best way possible, identifying where mental health interventions can occur before or during a crisis, and looking at how to support direct service staff/folks who are not intended to be the ones responding to a crisis but inevitably are put in that position (e.g. law enforcement)

**\***Group consensus was that 2022 area of focus should be on hearing from those with lived experience trying to access mental health services and how that’s gone/barriers encountered; using that feedback to suggest ways to improve current mental health resources in our community

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

Action Items:

* Members will let co-chairs know their preference related to individual term (two- or three-year term)
* Members will let co-chairs know if they are interested in being a part of a specific sub-committee

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