# Southern St. Louis County LAC

## Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2020

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| Present: | Andrea Rose, Bert Brandt, Carly Hiti, Jacquelyn Hanson-Hietala, Justin England-Sullivan, Liz Strohmayer, MaKenzie Johnson, Moira Villiard\*, Nathan Glockle, Sonja Wildwood\*, Tawna Schilling, Traci Laughlin  \*- Facilitator |
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1. Opening circle round, brief introduction and identified impacts of COVID-19 on MH services and immediate needs:

Immediate needs identified:

* Mental health of K-12 students
* Families struggling to obtain food and other items they need
* Lack of private transportation to pick up food from food shelves, Ruby’s Pantry, etc. as well as where donations are being distributed
* Individuals on unemployment whose MFIP benefits are off
* Clients with medical issues forced to stay home with children with schools closed
* Isolation resulting in depressive symptoms in individuals of all ages
* Parents having a hard time providing structure in the household
* Inability to pay rent due to decreased income; many clients work jobs that are unavailable with restrictions (restaurant servers, entertainment venue workers, etc.)
* Reaching individuals who do not have the money for, are uncomfortable with, or do not have the mental capacity to use technology. Some clients do not have consistent access to a cell phone or computer and/or live in areas with poor internet service; other clients live in facilities (i.e. jail, group homes, nursing homes) that do not technology set up to do virtual visits/appointments
* Court dates being pushed back- concern about keeping victims engaged with cases
* Many clients need physical affection and interaction, limited day program opportunities
* Increased substance use
* Lack of immediate response from crisis teams (mentioned at previous meeting as well)
* Concern about potential increase in domestic violence with compounding stressors
* People in prison are not going to engage virtually, programs limited
* Influx of referrals for services; overwhelming organizations’ capacities

1. Rochelle Lentz, report back from St. Louis County Inquiry

Who are the people in the room making the decisions?

* Monthly meetings to be held the Monday following each LAC meeting with LAC county liaisons (Rochelle Lentz [South], Melanie Smith [North]) and SLC unit supervisors & directors to include at least:
* Chris Heazlett- Adult Mental Health Supervisor South SLC
* Kelly Sather- Adult Mental Health Supervisor North SLC
* Gena Bossert- Behavioral Health Division Director
* Paul Stocke- Children and Family Services Division Director
* Matt Johnson- Supervisor Children’s Mental Health South SLC
* Brandie Webb- Supervisor Children’s Mental Health North SLC
* Melanie Smith- LAC County Liaison North SLC
* \*Other staff from Children & Family Services, Behavioral Health, Public Health, Housing/Homelessness as available

The meeting is for county leaders to hear what the LAC has to say and see if there is anything they can do immediately or in the long term

* The directors/supervisors will get information to community stakeholders HOWEVER LAC is also welcome to invite stakeholders in the mental health community as well as county staff on an informal basis for them to share/advise their own experiences and thoughts.
* County would like LAC to know that even if the county itself does not provide the resource, they could still help to grow and expand the resource wherever it exists in the community
* If there is an issue only the MN Department of Human Services (MN DHS) can change, supervisors and directors will do what they can to relay information while also providing LAC members with information on how to reach out the MN DHS more directly
* Information will be shared with county board in an annual presentation, but dialogue between LAC members, community members, county staff, and the county board can be ongoing throughout the year

Regarding previous St. Louis County LACs and bylaws:

* There was local advisory council (with Harmony Club) that was serving its purpose, but participation dwindled down (Chris Heazlett will provide Sonja and Moira contact information for Tina, who was leader with Harmony Club
* Lynn found some old SLC bylaws, but it was not connected with any recent LAC work and thus new bylaws can be created. There will be a set of bylaws for North SLC LAC and a different set for South SLC LAC

1. Lynn Goerdt, Q and A regarding LAC

Lynn:

* Role is ending in December with end of her contract with county, but she will still help in any way needed such as making connections or documents/data that could be helpful
* Encouraged group to invite people to meetings, gave example of North LAC inviting “First Call for Help” to their meeting to share information
* Also encouraged group to reach out to chairs of groups (i.e. Parent Advisory Council) and ask them a few questions to bring back to the group (in the case it doesn’t make sense for them to come in)
* The is a purpose of the LAC per MN Statute, but from her vantage point, what the county is wanting and sees as valuable is so much for than what the statute requires; not just more work and time but really wanting to make a difference in the county
* She was at a meeting in November with about 40 county staff who were told about LAC and that their role as staff is to be receptive, not defensive, and be open to change because they need to be ready to hear the conversation
* Sees a lot of sincerity in county leaders’ intentions- they are interested in changing, in funding things differently, helping build up services where they don’t exist, improving services that exist but aren’t good enough—they seem ready and interested but they need ideas, evidence, stories, and more information about what is needed

**4. LAC Guidelines, Bylaws review:**

* Set of Bylaws/rules/guidelines for how to operate as a council is needed
* Lynn created a DRAFT of bylaws based on an old set of SLC bylaws, other county LAC bylaws, and MN State Statute
* Discussion on whether guidelines were needed for meetings or if bylaws were okay for now- generally agreed that group will start with the bylaws and the guidelines will develop as the group meets more
* Notes from Lynn on Bylaws by Section:

Name: none

Mission: none

Purpose: A lot of thought was put into Purpose since she did not want it to be too complicated and essentially three pronged:

* Receive and provide input
* To recommend
* To Inform

Membership: Please review carefully, especially with thoughts on equity and participation. Make sure all perspectives are covered to have equity and inclusion. Suggests between 13-15 members (any more may be too many)

Leadership and support/terms of office: suggests each member picks two or three year terms so that membership is staggered

Meetings: What happens when members miss a lot of meetings, try not to be punitive but respectful of other people’s lives

Decision Making: Consensus decision making may make more sense than Robert’s Rules (rules more formal than necessary)

\*\*Continue amending the bylaws until it is ready, it is more important bylaws are thought out than completed swiftly

**Ideas Discussed Outside of Agenda Items**:

* Members want to ensure we have an equity lens and have conversations go back to equity and access to ensure we incorporate all people in the community and represent BIPOC and people with lack of access
* Must be careful not to single out minority groups (i.e. “diversity week” or “black perspective week”)
* It would be nice to have a main “hub” of available community resources available so that people working with clients only need to go to one place to find a wide range of information to help get people’s needs met (i.e. How do you get set up with a county social worker? How do you connect with providers in the Duluth area?
* Possibly connect with African Heritage in some way to see about common mental health concerns; also possibly connect with Indigenous Commission
* Group agreed to create and abide by a communication agreement/safety agreement to ensure free discussion, confidentiality, and to discourage characterizing people
* General agreement to start with a focus on kids in terms of information gathering then move onto adults
* Ideas on inviting someone to the next meeting (and future meetings):
* Hear from someone with “boots on the ground”
* Have two guest speakers per meeting: one for kids, one for adults
* Send questions to the guests before they come to LAC meeting
* Invite someone from a corporation to gather information on where resources are lacking, what we can do, etc.
* Focus on hearing from people of color in the community and what their mental health needs are
* Talk to people who see the impact of the mental health system, someone working in the MH field
* Children’s Mental Health Case Worker to see what barriers the kids and the social workers are facing
* Other organizations/individuals mentioned: Bethany Crisis Shelter, Tatiana Bergman (CM with at-risk youth), Steve O’Neill apartments Children’s Programs, Damiano Center Kids Program, CADI homes, Life House, CHUM, Social workers working with children aging out of foster care
* Decision made to invite SLC Mental Health Case Manager from ICWA and Tatiana Bergman to speak at the next meeting
* An ongoing list of people we would like to hear from will be created: possibly will go on Google Doc for additions otherwise members can email Sonja or Moira
* Community paramedics discussed: designed to reduce the use of emergency/urgent care for primary needs; like for folks with high needs with mental health issues

1. Moving Forward/Action Items:

* Review and revise/comment on bylaws (In Google Doc)
* Create communication agreement with the group in order to honor safe space
* Rochelle will reach out to county to find ICWA social worker to speak at the next meeting
* Invite Tatiana to the next LAC Meeting
* Start adding to the list of people the group would like to hear from as we start to build what/where resources are
* Research immediate crisis needs for adults in the area (possibly for Feb)
* Email topics and general contacts to Moira, Sonja, or Rochelle to add to Google Doc for discussion
* Put contact information into Google Doc
* Reflect on question from county leaders:

Who do you want to hear the council’s suggestions and recommendations? Who do you want your audience to be?

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| **Next meeting:** | **January 21, 2021 - 4:30p.m.- 6:00p.m., via Zoom** |