



Annual Report

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Having the privilege to lead Saint Louis Counseling brings me energy. Every day, I know that we are making an impact on the lives of others. I truly believe we are helping people improve their spirit, supporting them with compassion and professional therapy that allows their outlook on life to become positive and fulfilling.

Many have heard me say that we all have mental health – it is part of our overall health. The core mission of Saint Louis Counseling calls us to address the fact that we all have a daily ebb and flow to our mental health, and we need to be there for others to assist them through any valleys that they may experience. I am truly amazed to see our skilled and talented therapists help others overcome obstacles to positive well-being. I believe that relationship is at the core of all that we do, not just as clinicians but as humans. We know how to create therapeutic relationships with those in need because we know how to listen and be present in the moment, as we join our clients on their journeys toward healing.

As a therapist myself, I know the importance of not only being skilled at my craft, but realizing that treating others with dignity and compassion is the key to creating connection to change. This change does not only happen within the person but also within society, as we break down the stigma of mental health that often keeps people from getting the counseling they need to live a full life.

I invite you to join me on this journey toward healing. And feel the energy of helping others!

TOM DUFF, LCSW, MSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT

***Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ,
Saint Louis Counseling supports healing
and improved mental health for individuals and
families of all backgrounds through professional
counseling and psychiatric services.***

Responding with Hope

Life can be hard. Emotional difficulties, life challenges like divorce, the death of a loved one, and mental illness can sideline anyone. **Mental health issues affect all people, regardless of race, income, age, or any other demographic grouping.**

We work hard to **break down the stigma** that surrounds people with mental-health issues and mental illness. We know that clients sometimes travel to counseling far from their home communities, despite the inconvenience, to avoid being seen getting help. And sometimes, people who need counseling won't get it at all because of the fear of what others will think about them. We want to change that dynamic. Each day, we **ensure that people struggling with their own mental health are accepted and cared for and listened to so they can heal.**

Saint Louis Counseling cares for a wide range of our St. Louis community – more than 16,500 people each year – from preschoolers to seniors through schools and our offices and individuals who attend our presentations and trainings. With professional care, people with a mental illness can, and do, live full and happy lives.

Our hope and belief are that people will begin getting better after making their first call to us. And we see that happening! **We know the faces of our 9,000-plus clients – we know their hurts and struggles, and we know we are helping them to heal.** Sometimes it takes six counseling sessions. Sometimes it takes years of therapeutic support. And some clients who have been severely traumatized may see our therapists for the remainder of their lives. The good news is that we know we are creating hope and change for everyone who has the willingness to get better. In fact, **eight out of 10 of our clients report improvement in their mental well-being** after their course of therapy.





The Mental-health Crisis of COVID-19

COLLECTIVE TRAUMA DURING A PANDEMIC

Everyone has been impacted in some way by the COVID-19 pandemic. The **collective trauma of the pandemic varies from person to person** and may have even changed some beliefs, values, behaviors, traditions, and rituals that were once considered “constants” in life.

In addition, **COVID-19 has exposed many inequities in social systems** – including the significant physical and mental disparities on communities of color. Communities that even before the pandemic have been steeped in profound fear and trauma. For people of color; people living on the margins; people struggling with mental- and physical-health conditions; and people who live in poverty, the accessibility and availability to the care they need is often impeded. They simply can’t get services for several reasons, or they may be afraid to seek help. **This collective and cumulative impact often becomes overwhelming, causing despair and grief, intense fear and depression among individuals, families, and communities.**

The impact that **COVID-19 has had on children’s mental health** has yet to be fully realized. However, our school therapists have reported several concerns about students’ well-being, including an increase in anxiety, depression, behavioral issues, school refusal, isolation, major concerns for students who live in unsafe homes and the challenges of engaging them in therapy. If therapists can’t see the students or provide teletherapy, it becomes difficult to gauge their mental and physical wellness. And often, **the school therapist is the only person the student will trust to tell what is going on in their lives.**

As a **trauma-informed** agency, **we make it normal to talk about fears, grief, anxiety, depression, isolation, and concerns** that the pandemic has caused. Not just for our clients or teachers, first-responders and essential workers, but for our staff and therapists, too. The toll that COVID-19 has taken on mental health in general has been especially heavy. But – as always – **there is hope. And healing.**

Core Programs and Key Impact Areas

For more than 66 years, **Saint Louis Counseling has focused on meeting people where they are in their life journeys.** Our **therapists** help individuals in their struggles with depression, anxiety, ADHD, suicidal ideation, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, grief, and many other mental illnesses and mental-health conditions. We provide **psychiatry services** for children and adults so they can get the proper diagnosis and medication they may need to help them with day-to-day living. We are at the forefront of mental health discussions throughout the community. **We walk along the journey toward healing with anyone who reaches out and needs a listening ear.**

Saint Louis Counseling's core programs include:

- **MISSION-BASED COUNSELING**
- **OFFICE-BASED COUNSELING**
- **SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (SPP)**
- **COLLEGE COACHING PROGRAM**
- **COMMUNITY TRAININGS, PRESENTATIONS AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

Mission-based Counseling

RESPONDING WITH HOPE

Mental-health crises often come out of nowhere. From that first "hello," that first moment someone reaches out to us...we go to people in their despair or anxiety or trauma, providing immediate therapy and support. **Our 72 highly trained therapists go directly to the people with compassion. They step in to support healing, and often, save lives.**

From July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020, Saint Louis Counseling **responded to an average of at least one crisis every week** within a school or church community or a place of business. We do it because **It's what we are all called to do...to listen with our hearts.**

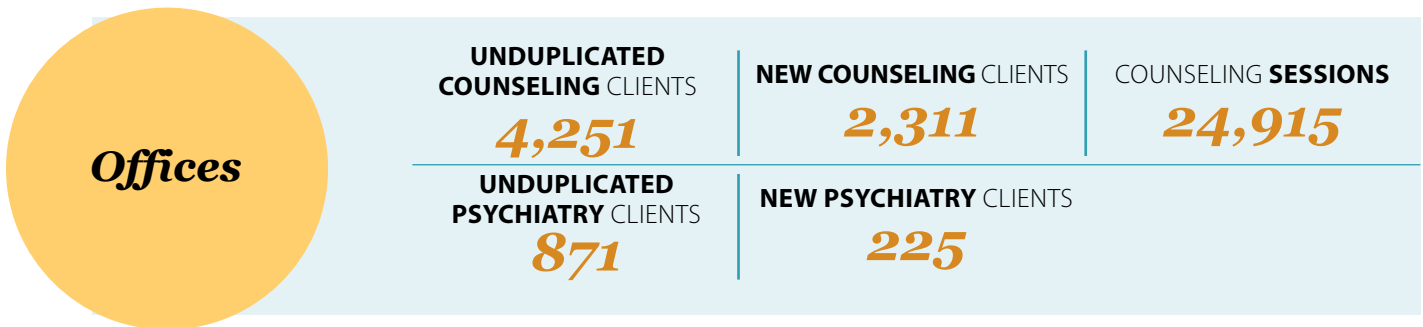


We receive a call from a school needing extra counselors following a parent's unexpected death. We respond with hope to help them find their way to healing.

Office-based Counseling & Psychiatry

SHARING COMPASSION

In the 2020 fiscal year, **4,847 people** received **Office-based Counseling**, and **871 children, adolescents, and adults** were seen by our **psychiatrist** during that time. From our youngest 3-year-old clients in play therapy to our senior citizens, each of our clients averaged six to eight therapy sessions. **Teletherapy** began in earnest in March 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and was the only form of counseling and psychiatric visits until St. Louis-area restrictions were eased to 25 percent capacity in June 2020. At that time, clients who required in-person sessions were able to be seen in the offices. **On average, 210 new clients called each month**, seeking a trusted counselor to listen to their story and begin the healing process.



School Partnership Program (SPP)


FOSTERING CONFIDENCE

Throughout the 2019-20 school year, **our School Partnership Program therapists provided treatment and support for 3,281 students in 126 schools (Catholic, private, and public)**. Our school program is based on the philosophy that the **school, family, and community are partners in educating our children, strengthening families, and building stronger, safer communities**.

A variety of factors — like social media platforms, increasing teen depression and suicide, substance use, bullying, anxiety, and body image — have especially hurt our kids, who are still growing, whose brains are still developing, and who are still learning to keep up with the rigors of life. **Our 42 committed, therapeutic school counselors** address these and other issues with the school community. **Embedded in the schools**, our therapists give teachers and students the tools they need to establish **strong social-emotional skills**, which are essential for problem-solving and healthy relationship-building. We'll continue to help students who need support **before** they fall into depression or exhibit behaviors that are hurtful to themselves or others. We help them grow in their confidence.

According to Mental Health First Aid, **37 percent of students with a mental health condition, aged 14 and older, drop out of school**. Mental illness and emotional and behavioral health issues don't discriminate according to one's income. But access to care does. The St. Louis Regional Mental Health Data Report published in May 2019 reported that "from 2021-2016, children living in areas of higher neighborhood poverty had higher average hospitalization rates for a mental disorder in both St. Louis County and St. Louis City." While they experience mental illness and trauma at high rates, getting counseling can often be difficult for these students because of accessibility and the stigma associated with mental health. **With counselors embedded in the schools, our SPP therapists can go directly to the students to provide counseling when they need it most.**



	DIRECT CLIENTS: STUDENTS	INDIRECT SPP CLIENTS	HOURS OF SPP SERVICE
	3,281	5,914	31,844
	ACHIEVED PROGRAM OUTCOMES (ORS)	SOCIAL RESPONSIVENESS SCALE (SRS)	
	76.9%	84.2%	



College Coaching Program

ENCOURAGING SUCCESS

To help college students manage the many obstacles they face on their journeys to adulthood, we created the **College Coaching Program**, a wrap-around plan to keep students on track as they begin college and potentially face isolation, depression, suicidal thoughts, or substance-use issues that typically impact **35% of college freshmen**. The mental-health issues that college students have suffered since the arrival of COVID has placed an even more urgent need for support for students. During the lock downs and virtual learning, **one in four college students aged 18-24** reported having serious thoughts about suicide.

To help combat those statistics, our College Coaching Program teams college students with a Saint Louis Counseling Coach who is a **Licensed Clinical Social Worker** – a “life coach on steroids,” as the coaches are affectionately known. The program empowers young adults, on their own for the first time, with accountability, independence, and success and allows them to be accountable to someone other than their parents **at a time that requires essential letting go for a healthy adulthood**.

Community Trainings & Presentations

BREAKING DOWN STIGMA THROUGH EDUCATION

Saint Louis Counseling provides community trainings, presentations, and prevention programs in the greater community. **We train through school partnerships, classrooms, and food pantries**. Trainings include **Mental Health First Aid, Second Step Program, and Trauma-Informed Care 101**.

**Top
Referral
Sources**

Schools / Special School District

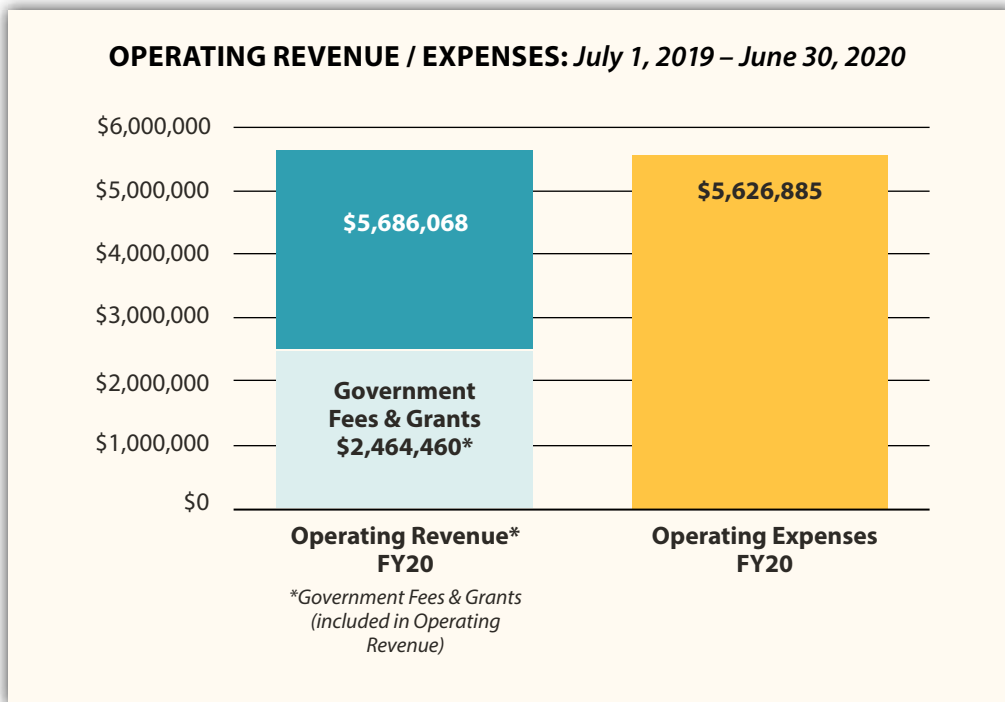
Family Member

Doctor / Psychiatrist

Internet / Website

Operations, Fees & Funding

Insurance reimbursements, county grants, foundations, private-pay clients, donors, employee assistance programs (EAP), and Medicare and Medicaid help to cover the costs of our mental-health services. For clients who do not have health insurance, we offer sliding-scale rates.





Saint Louis Counseling Board of Directors FY20

At Saint Louis Counseling, we are dedicated to surrounding ourselves with impassioned, experienced people who can help us grow our business, challenge us, and improve the agency as a leader of mental-health services. We seek to build and maintain a Board of Directors with a wide range of experiences, expertise, and perspectives. And we look for people who are passionate about mental health, the common good, our current strategies and can help us adapt them to our ever-changing world so we can improve people's lives.

Gene Poisson, *Board President*

Meghan Bohac, *Board Vice President*

Stephanie King, *Board Secretary*

Jim Jaacks, *Board Treasurer*

Castor Armesto

René Crosswhite

Dan Holmes

Kalila Jackson

Tom Lally

Msgr. Eugene Morris

Caroline Mug

Gene Poisson

Patti Rosenthal, MSW, LCSW

Theresa Ruzicka, *President | Catholic Charities of St. Louis*

Rick Schwartze

Dan Walsh

Saint Louis Counseling Leadership Team FY20

The Saint Louis Counseling employees who make up the Leadership Team are professionals who represent the many facets of social services. They are committed to ensuring that our mental-health services and programs reflect our mission of providing compassionate healing and improved mental health to our clients, schools and the communities in which we serve.

Tom Duff, LCSW, MSW

Executive Director

Saundra Barker, LCSW, MSW

Chief Program Officer

Mark Vogt

Director of Finance

Beth Crider, MPA

Grant Writer/Community Liaison

Sarah Davis

Office Manager

Debbie Dugan

Business Development/Marketing Director

Laura Durrer

Finance Assistant

Blake Hildwein

Director of Administrative Services & HR

Chelsea Link, MA, LPC

*School Partnership Program Supervisor,
Clinical Therapist*

Amanda Wolfenbarger, MA, MSW

*Director of Quality Improvement & Strategic
Alignment*

Funding and Partnerships

Annual grants and funding from the following organizations, foundations and corporations help to offset costs of Saint Louis Counseling's services for the individuals we serve. Saint Louis Counseling is grateful to the following for their continued support of the agency:



Our therapists are all licensed by the Missouri Division of Professional Registration and confidentially treat a wide range of emotional, behavioral, personal, and relationship-related issues, and mental illnesses. One of eight federated agencies of Catholic Charities of St. Louis, we are a separate 501(c)(3) with our own Board of Directors and are accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).



For more information:

SAINT LOUIS COUNSELING

9200 WATSON RD., STE G-101

SAINT LOUIS, MO 63126

314.544.3800

Office Locations

South County/

Administration Office

9200 Watson Rd, G-101

St. Louis, MO 63126

P: 314.544.3800

Union Office

102 E. Springfield, Ste. 202

Union, MO 63084

P: 636.583.1800

O'Fallon, MO, Office

311 South Main, Ste. 100

O'Fallon, MO 63366

P: 636.281.1990

Florissant Office

1385 Harkee Drive

Florissant, MO 63031

P: 314.831.1533

Troy, MO, Office

#140 Professional Pkwy

Troy, MO 63379

P: 636.528.5911

Bellefontaine Neighbors Office

10235 Ashbrook Drive

St. Louis, MO 63137

P: 314.831.1533

Herculaneum Office

1349 McNutt Street

Herculaneum, MO 63048

P: 636-638-2203

WEBSITE

SaintLouisCounseling.org

PODCAST

Mental Health Matters

FACEBOOK

@SaintLouisCounseling

TWITTER

@stl_counseling

INSTAGRAM

@Saint Louis Counseling

LINKED IN

Saint Louis Counseling
(formerly Catholic Family Services)