



From the Executive Director By Nancy Salamy, LMFT

FALL 2015 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

I am so pleased to share with you, what we have accomplished over this last year. There are many accomplishments to mention and all of them were made possible because of individuals like you. From our donors to our volunteers, we deeply appeciate what you bring to our agency and work. In the spirit of appreciation, allow me to share some of our recent accomplishments with you.

In June, we celebrated our 5th annual walk/run for suicide prevention around Lake Merritt. This year's walk/run was our biggest ever and brought so many individuals together to honor loved ones, to connect and find healing through sharing, and to be advocates for reducing the stigma associated with suicide, depression and mental illness. Sponsored by Kaiser Permanente who has given its support to our event every year, we were thrilled to have their support once again. And this year, we were equally thrilled to add Sutter Health Alta Bates Summit Medical Center; UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland; and Bay Area Community Services (BACS) to our list of sponsors. With the tremendous growth of our event, we give all of our sponsors our deepest thanks. We also had several online fundraising teams such as Team Toby and Team Jesse join us this year and inspire us with their participation and fundraising efforts. I hope everyone at our 5th annual walk/run knows how much their support means to us.

On a hot September day (over 100 degrees), we held our 12th Annual Robby Babcock Memorial Golf Tournament. Thanks to Kevin Chambers, the Babcock family, over100 individual golfers, and 38 sponsors who all came out to the Oakhurst Country Club in Clayton to support our event. It was a huge success.

I am also very proud to share with you, the outcomes of our services that are featured below. We are fortunate to have amazing staff, volunteers, interns, and clinical supervisors who work hard, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide the very best services to our community.

Lastly, as we approach the holidays, I ask you to think about the community we serve and how you can help make a difference. Make a donation today, during our Year-End Campaign, or both. We are so very thankful for your support.

Warmest regards,

Grief Counseling

of adult clients served...82 # of sessions...335

Senior Counseling

of senior clients served...172 # of sessions...2,287

School-Based Counseling

of individuals served...224 # of sessions...2,621

DURING THIS PAST YEAR: 2014-2015

Community Education: Teens for Life

of middle & high school students served..9,000 # of classroom presentations...306

Community Gatekeeping & Mental Health Consultations

of adults from the community trained...1,016 # of community health fairs attended...15 # of community members at fairs reached...1,246

The Crisis Line

of Crisis Line calls...60,734 # of emergency outreach calls...333 # of emergency dispatch rescues for clients w/imminent risk for self-harm...148

Text Counseling

of text sessions...685

Clinical Interns & Volunteers

of clinical interns trained...30 # of licensed supervisors...20 # of Crisis Line volunteers...185



My Training and Work at CSS By Stephany Howard

My training and work at CSS has affected me profoundly, not only as a counselor, but as a friend and family member. The training at CSS has shown me that though listening can seem simple and even simplistic, it is actually an incredibly challenging and transformative practice. CSS inspired a somewhat sudden realization for me around listening; it is far more helpful than one might expect, and I don't do it nearly enough. Hearing from our diverse population of callers has also fundamentally exposed me to a humbling range of challenges that afflict people, as well as the bewildering

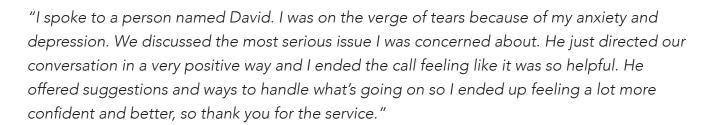
strength and resiliency with which many people persevere in their lives. My work at CSS has infused me with gratitude for the most basic privileges I enjoy and might otherwise easily take for granted. Likewise, thanks to my training at CSS, when I encounter someone who is suffering, I feel safe to meet and support them where they are, without losing my footing. In my heart of hearts, I feel that the training that CSS offers should be mandatory for all people.

Messages from Our Callers Submitted by Binh Au, Crisis Line Director

Our good work would not be possible without the dedication of our Crisis Line staff and volunteers. Here are a few examples of voice messages that callers provided for us in surveys about our Crisis Line and volunteers:

"I would have probably laid on the floor, half-dead if this person hadn't helped me. I can't believe how helpful she was. I will call you guys every time.

Man, I can't believe how helpful you guys are. People sometimes need help so bad. Thank you very much."



"You have helped me and have helped keep me on the planet over the years."





Connectedness and HopeBy Mercedes Coleman, Director of Community Education

The 2012 National Strategy of Suicide Prevention (NSSP) states that the first goal of suicide prevention is to promote awareness that *suicide is a public health issue*. It supports the message that we all have a role in preventing suicide and spreading the message of hope. Better awareness that suicide is a serious public health problem results in knowledge change, which then influences beliefs and behaviors. Among NSSP's primary aims are to

promote opportunities and settings to enhance *connectedness* among persons, families, and communities.

Connectedness is a common thread that weaves together many of the influences of suicidal behavior and has direct relevance for prevention, which is among the protective factors for suicidality. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines connectedness as the degree to which a person or group is socially close, interrelated, or shares resources with other persons or groups.

Crisis Support Services of Alameda County (CSS) has provided suicide prevention and intervention services in Alameda County for almost 50 years. While no single intervention can prevent all suicides, according to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and Jed Foundation, research has shown that a comprehensive approach is most effective. A comprehensive approach to suicide prevention includes seven key strategies (image below) most of which are utilized and supported by our agency in some capacity.



Community education enhances our agency's capacity to fulfill the goals of this approach by training our community to identify people at risk, increasing helpseeking among those who are in crisis, connecting those who are vulnerable to our mental health counseling and crisis management services, and responding to a crisis in the community by providing postvention services.

Our Community Education Program serves as one of the many linkages between our agency and those in the community who are in a position of helping to foster connectedness and hope.



A Much-Delayed Exit Survey and Letter Submitted by Devah DeFusco, LMFT, Clinical Director

To preserve the confidentiality of our clients and interns, the names of the client and intern in this letter have been intentionally omitted.

Ms. DeFusco,

I'm enclosing the much-delayed exit survey for services from CSS regarding my counselor. I don't feel a row of numbers, though, really does justice to how much she, and by extension Crisis Support Services, was a real life-saver in my recent protracted difficulties.

I give my counselor's help and wise counsel much of the credit for saving my marriage, keeping my house, and getting me stably re-employed after a very, very long time.

I'd really been through the mill financially and had run out of savings and available credit as employers steadfastly refused to hire me despite my experience and qualifications. I had a lender attempt to foreclose on a house that was fully current in its payments and had my wife's job worsen with medical problems and chronic pain issues as we were totally dependent on keeping one of us working. I had a job supposedly created for me and then given to someone else at the worst possible moment financially, had my father sicken and die, and through all of this, had alleged "job coaches" tell me that somehow, this was all due to my own moral failings and my "getting on the wrong track."

My counselor helped me face all of this, as few things at a time as possible, without killing myself or anyone else. She helped me to not lash out in counter-productive anger at any of my various tormentors. Well, not too much anyway. And she helped me find empathy for my wife's pain-driven and sincere, but often unwise and knee-jerk reactions to all these problems.

In a world where I seemed to have little control over anything, and my wife had even less, my counselor helped me realize what I did have some control over at any moment in time, and the ways in which my life, despite all its problems, had a pretty substantial upside. I'll be forever grateful to her, and to your agency for making her services available.

Very truly yours,

Client Served



CSS is seeking volunteer clinical supervisors. Supervisors are offered a wealth of support and training, as well as CEUs, and have typically found their involvement with the agency a rewarding experience. A one-year minimum commitment to one supervisee for one hour of individual supervision per week is required. Dr. Nancy Fuller Hebble, LMFT, PhD, leads a monthly supervisor consultation group. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact the Clinical Director, Devah DeFusco at: (510) 420-2475.



Student Letters to The Community Education Staff

L-R: Kate Eisler, Ben Pauw, Mercedes Coleman, Cris Rita, Matt Podkomorski

Dear Matt,

Thanks so much for coming to my class and explaining to us what we need to know. I have friends who suffer from depression. I actually saved a life. I gave the number on the card. That person was saved. You could tell. It gave me a great feeling to know that one more life is saved. I don't know what people would do without you guys. I would love to do what you do for a living. It truly is a great sensation to know you helped someone in desperate need. Especially when they didn't even know it. As a freshman, I want to know so much more. You taught me that. Thank you! Please come and visit again.

Sincerely,

9th Grade Student Newark Memorial High School, Newark, CA

Dear Mercedes and Ben.

Thank you so much for coming to Saint Mary's and talking about suicide and depression. The reason why I'm so thankful is because I struggle with depression and at one moment in my life, I wanted to kill myself. Now I talk to my parents and a therapist about it, but it's nice to know that people care about the topic because I think that it is a huge thing that teens and others go through. Now I can help my friends even more by calling the crisis line when they have a problem. Thank you so much.

9th Grade Student Saint Mary's High School, Berkeley, CA

Dear Kate,

Thank you for giving that presentation. Now I know when someone's depressed. My mom actually tried to commit suicide one time because she found out that my dad was seeing another woman. She went to many doctors to get over it. Now I know what to do if something like that ever happens again.

9th Grade Student Granada High School, Livermore, CA

Many thanks to our recent donors! Every effort has been made to provide an accurate listing of our generous supporters. In the case of an inadvertent error or omission please accept our apologies and notify us so we can correct the error in the future. Please contact our Development Department at (510) 420-2472 or kmizuhara@crisissupport.org.



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