

THE CENTER'S NEW MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING PROGRAM



Led by advisory member Richard Lewis, in collaboration with Long Beach "First Lady" Nancy Foster, Long Beach 2nd District Councilmember Suja Lowenthal, and Signal Hill Councilmember Larry Forester, a 20-member Mental Health Steering Committee (comprised of medical and mental health professionals, as well as educational, political and community leaders from the general Long Beach area identified the need for an LGBTQ Counseling Services Program that

- a) reduces barriers to mental health care including cost,
- b) promotes the achievement of more adequate, satisfying and productive interpersonal relationships and social adjustments to LGBTQ seniors, young adults, youth and their families in Long Beach,
- c) advances the knowledge level, attitudes, skills and experience of health providers among the general community of Long Beach to more effectively identify and respond, with decreased disparity, to psychosocial and emotional needs of members of the LGBT community,
- d) provides access to a resource for personal and family growth that is otherwise not readily available to this population and
- e) empowers individuals, couples and family to identify and modify psychosocial aspects in the immediate lives, communities, and resources through assertive communication and participation.

We recognize that the challenges in our lives may lead to isolation, anxiety, depression, and other health problems – especially in the LGBTQ population – and that it takes a focused and knowledgeable professional to assist in the recovery process. Our program seeks to assist people with enhancing relationships, improving healthy communication, decreasing violence, treating substance abuse, improving self-esteem and providing for a greater sense of safety and well being in their lives.

In order to meet these goals, The Center Long Beach is requesting \$50,000 from the California Endowment Foundation. With these funds, the Counseling Program at The Center Long Beach will provide intakes, comprehensive psychosocial assessments and interventions designed and conducted to identify issues that are the likely source of personal and/or familial distress to clients. We will also provide individual psychotherapy, relationship counseling, group psychotherapy, psychosocial group counseling, additional diagnostic assessment, and referrals identified as necessary in the psychosocial assessment. In addition, as a recognized provider with the State of California, we will offer continuing education (CE) training to the helping professions within greater Long Beach for issues unique to the LGBTQ community.

The Counseling Center will be supervised by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) who will oversee ten MFT and MSW graduates and interns who are registered in the State of California. Candidates for doctorates in Psychology, Social Work and/or counseling will also be considered. The Clinical Director, specializing in issues relevant to the LGBTQ community, will supervise ten interns six days a week to do individual, group, family and couples counseling, as well as facilitate various workshops, training and support groups based on needs identified within the LGBTQ community through surveys and client feedback. These services will exist at a low cost or sliding fee scale, as ability to pay was a primary barrier we sought to eliminate.

MFT and MSW graduates and interns will provide services on a year-round basis and be expected to carry an

average caseload of ten service-units (defined as one hour spent per individual, couple or family) per week for approximately 18 weeks. When fully operational with ten interns, we expect to serve almost 250 individuals, couples and/or families per year for a total of 4160 service units on average (taking into account recidivism). Additionally, each intern will be given forty hours of training including two additional continuing education sessions for professional licensure credit. All interns will be supervised per Board of Behavioral Science regulations by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker respective to the intern's registration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
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