

Impact 100

Final Report 2014

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Therapy Center of Philadelphia (f.k.a. Women's Therapy Center) received a \$14,000 award last year from the Impact 100 giving circle to further the mission of the agency. It came at a perfect time, as we were going through big changes and growing our mission. Based on the goals of our strategic plan, we expanded our services to provide quality feminist psychotherapy to adult low-income women and now also to transgender communities. With this momentum in place, we took the opportunity to redefine ourselves even further and adopted a new name, logo, and tagline. Below displays the results:



Therapy Center of Philadelphia (TCP) remained committed to preventing low-income women from slipping into poverty by providing access to affordable, effective psychotherapy that helped women heal emotionally while improving their economic self-sufficiency. With this renewed commitment and growth came a whole new opportunity to market our services and see more clients. Our results included:

- Provided individual, couples, and group therapy to 30 more low-income women
- Of those, 13 accessed TCP's low cost EMDR/trauma services to overcome significant traumas
- Reduced our intake closure time by 30%
- Of those, 14 client's therapy rates increased and 9 of them secured employment while in treatment, thus indicating an improvement in their economic self-sufficiency and a reduction in their risk of slipping into poverty
- Hired another therapist
- Increased Clinical Director's hours (3 additional hours) for more clinical supervision and oversight of the intake department due to more clients being seen and more clinical issues arising

The Impact 100 award gave TCP the staff capacity to achieve all of this growth and to help 30 more women, who would otherwise have nowhere to turn, transform their lives – emotionally and economically. These women got better and stayed better because they had the opportunity to change.

This year, Therapy Center of Philadelphia also achieved the following accomplishments:

- Launched a name/logo/tagline change with support from community members, staff, board, and key constituents.
- Developed a new relationship with a feminist psychotherapy private practice that will now offer low-cost psychiatry services to TCP clients for 1/4th the market rate, regardless of insurance.

- Started a new music therapy group with a certified music therapist that is in its second recruitment cycle. Quotes from past members include: “On a weekly basis this group gave me the opportunity to pause, ground myself, reset — whatever I needed for that week.” “During this group I could just BE. Knowing what that feels like has allowed me to get closer to that space in situations outside of group that aren’t as comfortable.”
- Hosted a Luncheon Fundraiser with keynote speaker, Dr. Beverly Greene, PhD, talking on “ *Considering Race and the Matrix of Identities in Psychotherapy*.”
- Developed concept to start a prospective parenting group for lesbian/bi/queer/and transgender families. This is going to be co-sponsored with Philadelphia Family Pride.

These accomplishments and numbers can say a lot but nothing demonstrates better than sharing a client story. Following describes a 28 y.o. Puerto Rican woman who came to us at the end of 2013.

Alicia called TCP one morning after being told she had been fired from her job. This was the second retail position she had lost in two months and was panicked and in tears when she called. Alicia was a 28 year old woman who had grown up in Puerto Rico until she was 14 years old when her mother moved her and her brother to New Jersey. She moved out and came to Philadelphia alone when she was 20 because her mother had developed a drinking problem that caused her to be emotionally and physically violent to Alicia and her older brother. When she called TCP, Alicia spoke with an intake counselor about how she had also been physically assaulted two months ago and was struggling to seek medical care for it because she didn’t have insurance. The physical and emotional effects of the assault combined with the loss of her family had contributed to her losing her jobs. She was afraid to leave her home and had recently developed panic attacks at night. She also wasn’t eating and was having trouble sleeping.

Alicia was scheduled for an intake the next week with a TCP therapist. In the intake, she shared how she had originally been in school to be a nurse’s aide but had to drop out due to the assault injuries and emotional struggles. She opened up that she missed her family in Puerto Rico, felt isolated and at times, and wanted more Latina community. She had been dating a Chilean man prior to the assault but the relationship ended when she became so depressed and fearful. She felt alone and with few resources.

Alicia was able to pay the minimum fee for individual therapy at TCP and was matched the next week with Katrina, a therapist who had a background in trauma and first generation cultural experiences. They connected quickly and worked together weekly over this past year. They focused first on helping her feel safe enough to leave the house and acquire another position in a clothing store. Katrina taught Alicia how to calm herself down when she was triggered using a series of breathing and visualization techniques. They began this way each session until Alicia felt she could complete the exercises on her own. Once these grounding techniques were employed Katrina introduced a therapeutic technique called EMDR (eye movement desensitization reprocessing) to focus on the assault. They followed a specific evidenced-based protocol that allowed Alicia to reprocess the trauma and let it go. During this process, trauma around her relationship to her parents emerged and they were able to work through that as well. This work was steady and consistent over the past year. By the December of 2014, Alicia had enrolled in a medical assistant program and was dating someone new. She also began attending ALANON meetings to help her navigate her relationship with her mother. She finally reconnected with her brother and several aunts and uncles and even figured out how to go to Puerto Rico for a visit. Just this January Alicia and Katrina decided that their work was complete. In the last session Alicia said to Katrina “As you know, in my culture you don’t tell strangers your secrets. Your counseling approach was so warm and skillful; I was able to trust you right away. My life is so different than a year ago. I am stronger and reconnected to people I love. The pain is dulled and feels far away now. Thank you for helping it all change.”