Appendix H – Friends Counseling Service Report

Friends Counseling Service offers therapeutic counseling services to individuals, couples and families in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting which are affordable and grounded in the Quaker spirit. Services also include consultation to Friends and meetings regarding substance use and abuse, addictions treatment and other behavioral challenges. FCS providers are qualified mental health professionals and active Friends.

- Services are provided by licensed counselors, members of the yearly meeting, for a fee of $95 a session;
- Counselors are paid $70 for each session;
- Counselor reimbursement rate is 40% below the customary fee;
- Friends who are unable to pay this fee are provided a financial subsidy by FCS;
- Subsidy is based on a sliding scale of household income;
- The minimum fee asked of those receiving subsidy is $20; those Friends who can afford the usual and customary fee ($125) help to defray the cost of the subsidy provided to those that cannot.

FSC Subsidy is also provided through an endowment and contributions:
- The Arlene Kelly Fund valued at approximately $43,500 and managed by Friends Fiduciary Corporation;
- The John Martin Trust Fund contributes $15,000 annually to the FCS; monthly meetings are asked to contribute funds to offset subsidy received by their meeting members.

Currently, there are nine FCS psychotherapists serving Friends in the yearly meeting. Several of these clinicians are planning to retire in the next few years, so we are actively seeking new clinicians. This spring, Kenneth Brick, LCSW stepped down as the Friends Counseling Service Coordinator after five years of service. Janaki Spickard Keeler, LCSW has taken the position. Jess Purvis continues in their position providing administrative support.

Due to COVID-19, the FCS counselors have moved almost entirely online, with one counselor seeing some clients outside and socially distanced. The shift to online services opens up services to individuals and families who live far from the current clinicians, and we are excited to be able to reach areas of the yearly meeting that had previously not been able to access counseling services.

Friends Counseling Service provides workshops as part of the Ministry and Care Thread Gatherings. In March, we held a Thread Gathering on Trauma and Healing, on how meetings can support the Quaker tradition of eldership as it relates to the mental health, conflict in meeting, and the wellness of individuals and community. Workshops included Understanding Trauma: A Friend’s Perspective, Healing from Racial Trauma, and Friends and Conflict.

This summer, we sponsored a 5-week free online series on mindfulness meditation, led by FCS counselor Deborah Cooper.