

Friends Counseling Service Report to the Quaker Life Council

Friends Counseling Service offers professional 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 licensed 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, 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 seven 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. Janaki Spickard Keeler, LCSW serves as coordinator and Jess Purvis provides administrative support.

Due to COVID-19, the FCS counselors moved almost entirely online, with one counselor seeing some clients outside and socially distanced. The shift to online services opened 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. As pandemic restrictions ease, we intend to continue to offer some telehealth opportunities.

The Friends Counseling Service Advisory Panel, the oversight body that sets policy for the counseling service, was launched this year. The current members are Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch, Robert Greene, Sallie Jones, and Danielle Havelin. Janaki Spickard Keeler and George Schaefer serve in an *ex officio* capacity.

This year, FCS sponsored two online series on mindfulness meditation led by FCS counselor Deborah Cooper and a class on how to get better sleep led by Sarah Whitman, who formerly served as psychiatrist for the counseling service.