



empowering women in times of challenge and change

SUPPORTING CLIENTS ON THEIR JOURNEYS TOWARD WHOLENESS

Despite nearly two years in a pandemic, The Women's Initiative successfully served **more than 2,200 clients** through our core programs in 2021. We continue to operate on a hybrid model, utilizing both in-person and telehealth options for care, providing vital mental health services regardless of ability to pay. This includes individual counseling, therapeutic support group offerings, call-in clinics, mind/body offerings, and education and outreach.

Our mental health counseling program is the heart of our agency. It takes courage to reach out for care, especially now. We applaud our clients resolve to reconnect with their resilience.

In addition to our individual counseling services, we offer education, outreach, and social support opportunities.

In 2021

7,769

individual counseling
sessions

25%

increase in sessions
compared to 2019

TWI Relaunches Educational Opportunities for Community Resilience

The Women's Initiative has long provided educational presentations and workshops in the community to promote mental health and wellness skills, decrease stigma around mental health issues, and increase access to care. Now two years into the pandemic, the hope is to revisit and respond to the

educational programming needs of the community and expand capacity with special efforts to support frontline health and human services providers who are most affected by this time.
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Steadfast on Our Mission as We Look to the Future

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

The warmer seasons of spring and summer often symbolize rebirth, growth, joy, and gathering — and this year may bring stronger desires to renew oneself and find community in others as we begin to emerge from the pandemic. For many, it can feel like things are getting “back to normal.” However, the past two years have been difficult for each of

us in myriad ways and the effects of the pandemic remain; it is important for each of us to prioritize our own healing and mental health.

At The Women’s Initiative, we stay focused on our mission to provide vital mental health services with a robust hybrid model of care, offering both telehealth and in-person counseling options, to meet the needs of our community. In the near future, we look

forward to welcoming clients back in person for walk-in clinic, while still providing virtual/call-in clinic as an option. Through the fall, we will continue to offer both in-person and virtual options for arts & connection and mind/body programs, and clinical groups. Furthermore, Audrey Stefenson, TWI’s new resilience educator and mental health therapist, is excited to serve the Charlottesville area by supporting efforts to develop and expand education to foster community resilience. *(Read more on page 3.)*

It can still feel like we’re carrying the weight of the last two years on our shoulders. When times feel tougher than usual, I choose to draw inspiration and strength from those around me — our clients, our staff, and the entire Charlottesville community who have shown incredible resilience during this challenging time. Thank you for your inspiration and your support of The Women’s Initiative.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "E.I.R." with a flourish.

Elizabeth Irvin, LCSW
Executive Director

Who We Are

Mission

The mission of The Women’s Initiative is to provide women with effective counseling, social support, and education so they can transform life challenges into positive change and growth.

Vision

All women in our community will have access to innovative, effective, evidence-based mental health care.

Values

We believe every woman has a capacity for healing that, once supported, results in better mental and physical health for her, her family, and our community. We believe it is critical to address each woman’s unique emotional, physical, spiritual, and cultural needs and strengths. We are committed to providing compassionate care that maintains the highest standard of excellence in an environment that is welcoming, safe, and supportive.



PH: 434.872.0047 FAX: 434.872.0049

Main Office

1101 East High Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Jefferson School City Center Office

233 4th Street NW, Suite W (Second Floor)
Charlottesville, VA 22903

www.thewomensinitiative.org
info@thewomensinitiative.org

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Community Resilience at the Forefront

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TWI's new Resilience Educator and Mental Health Therapist Audrey Stefenson aims to develop and expand education to foster community resilience. With a background in community mental health, wellness promotion, and mind/body practices, she looks forward to serving the Charlottesville area by utilizing the agency's Resilience Model of Care and developing a "Care for the Caregiver" initiative.



WHAT IS TWI'S RESILIENCE MODEL OF CARE?

The TWI Resilience Model of Care is both a treatment program and organizational approach for implementing trauma-informed, culturally responsive best practices. The goal is to meet our clients where they are in their healing journeys and to support staff on the front lines of this work. We apply this model of care across our programs, the agency overall, and to our work in the community.

Our Resilience Model of Care supports the building of skills in six different areas:

- Emotional awareness
- Relationships
- Self-exploration and joy
- Physical wellness
- Self-efficacy
- Purpose

Resilience Model of Care means a commitment to:

- Trauma-informed care
- Cultural humility
- Resilience in our organizational structures and environment

We want to partner with you! Interested in a program or workshop for your organization or community group? Visit our Education Inquiry Form at thewomensinitiative.org/education-outreach or contact Audrey at astefenson@thewomensinitiative.org or (434) 218-2353.

The Women's Initiative Partners With Virginia Festival of the Book

The Women's Initiative believes in the power of the written word and writing as a form of healing. This year, TWI had the honor of moderating the event, "Life-Threatening Unknowns and Inequities in American Healthcare," as part of the 2022 Virginia Festival of the Book on March 18 at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. The Virginia Festival of the Book brings together writers and readers to promote and celebrate books, reading, literacy, and literary culture. Authors Taylor Harris, Anushay Hossain, and N. West Moss shared their individual stories and explorations of the assumptions, expectations, and fears revealed by the American healthcare system and modern medicine. Thank you to everyone who attended the event in person and virtually!



Healing Happens Here

The Women's Initiative is dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming space for all. This includes unique programming for Black women and women of color, Latinx clients, refugees, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. In 2021, our Bienestar program, which focuses on counseling and psychoeducational services for Latina women and their communities, served 404 individuals.

Our Sister Circle program, which provides culturally responsive mental health counseling and treatment as well as social support for Black women to engage in collective healing, served 514 people.

Our call-in clinic provides one-on-one sessions with a therapist over the phone free of charge during certain hours. The Spanish-speaking community can access the Bienestar call-in clinic via our

Spanish phone line at (434) 328-1800 on Wednesdays from 2–4pm. Every call-in clinic also has a Black therapist available. You may view the full schedule on our website at thewomensinitiative.org/walk-in-wellness-clinic. Additionally, our Jefferson School City Center office (located at 233 4th Street NW) has two Sister Circle therapists and a Spanish-speaking therapist.

For a preview of our upcoming Bienestar and Sister Circle programming, please see page 6.

404 women served in our Bienestar program

514 women served in our Sister Circle program



Photos from Sister Circle's Life-Giving Gardening program in partnership with Cultivate Charlottesville

Our Commitment to LGBTQ+ Clients

As part of our efforts to improve LGBTQ+ care, we recently piloted a Q Social Hour, and received feedback that it opened meaningful connections and served as a safe and fun space! We are recruiting new facilitators to help carry forward the social hour and expand our LGBTQ+ programs. For more information, please visit thewomensinitiative.org/volunteer-opportunities.

We continue to be guided by our LGBTQ+ Affirming Care commitment to support safe, nurturing spaces and opportunities for healing and connection.

The Women's Initiative affirms LGBTQ+ identities and relationships and rejects homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism as part of our commitment to culturally responsive trauma-informed care. We pledge to continue

to prioritize training for staff therapists to strengthen competency and develop expertise in LGBTQ+ affirming mental health services.

We recognize that safe spaces to explore shared experiences are an important part of the healing process, particularly with culturally based and gender-based trauma. For that reason, we offer affinity groups designed to meet the needs of specific populations. Eligibility to participate in these groups may be limited to certain aspects of identity including race, gender, or sexual orientation.

The best way to determine if a particular group is right for you is to call us at (434) 872-0047.



10th Annual Girls' Day Out Raises \$140K to Support Care for Women

The 2022 Girls' Day Out was an incredible afternoon filled with artwork, food and wine, and wonderful company. Hosted by Dorothy Batten at the beautiful Oakencroft Farm & Winery on May 1, the event had close to 200 guests and volunteers in attendance and raised \$140,000 to help ensure that all women in our community have access to trauma-informed, evidence-based mental health care, regardless of ability to pay.

It was our most successful event yet. Thank you to our entire event committee, the generous artists for donating 30 pieces of artwork, our co-chairs Katharine Brooks and Mary Blanton, and our art co-curators Cate West Zahl and Alexis Ryan. You are all part of what made Girls' Day Out a tremendous success!



Michelle Packer and Beverly Colwell Adams



Gloria Rockhold and Ingrid Ramos



Elizabeth Irvin, Katharine Brooks, and Marge Connelly



Marge Connelly and Elizabeth Irvin



Dorothy Batten and Meredith Woo



Shannon Worrell and Holly Hatcher



Karen Moran and Fiona Forward

EVENT COMMITTEE

- Mary Blanton, *co-chair*
- Katharine Brooks, *co-chair*
- Alexis Ryan, *art co-curator*
- Cate West Zahl, *art co-curator*
- Carolyn Beach
- Antoinette Brewster
- Catherine Brown
- Kristin Cory
- Christy Craddock
- Scheline Crutchfield
- Marcela Foshay
- Lauren Gartland
- Ashley Gunderson
- Bryce Harris
- Bebe Heiner
- Anne Jones
- Barkley Laing
- Louise McNamee
- Ann Marie Park
- Christina Teague
- Railey Testerman

2022 ARTISTS

- Isabelle Abbot
- Bridget Baylin
- Karen Blair
- Tori Cherry
- Scheline Crutchfield
- Britt Davis
- Jen Deibert
- Lindsay Heider Diamond
- Brittany Fan
- Christina Flowers
- Michelle Gagliano
- Lauren Moses Gordon
- Cassie Guy
- Abby Kasonik
- Logan MacKethan
- Evan Mooney
- Edith Read
- Lisa A. Ryan
- Kiki Slaughter
- Suzanne Tanner-Chitwood
- Kate Thomas
- Krista Townsend
- Andrea Ruedy Trimble
- Sarah Trundle
- Priscilla Whitlock
- Kara Williams
- Laura Wooten
- Christen Yates
- Sarah Boyts Yoder
- Cate West Zahl

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- REDESIGN staging + design
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- Wells Fargo Advisors Management
- Woods Rogers



The Women's Initiative
1101 East High Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902

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“When I came to The Women’s Initiative, I felt that recovery was really possible for me ... and I am extremely grateful. Now, I feel I can look back and really feel that strength and believe in myself and what is possible.”
-Recent TWI client

2022 SPRING NEWSLETTER ENCLOSED

PRSRT MKT
U.S. POSTAGE
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CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA
PERMIT NO.381

Upcoming Affinity Programs

Bienestar

Programas para Mujeres Latinas y la comunidad Latinx
*Programs for Latina women and the Latinx community
conducted in Spanish*

Un Tiempo Para Mi

7 y 14 de julio

Un taller para desarrollar la conciencia plena

La Cultura Cura

22 y 29 de junio, 20 y 27 de julio, y 24 y 31 de agosto

Un grupo de apoyo social intergeneracional enfocado en La Mujer Latina y Latinx femmes para la conexión, la sanación, y el aprendizaje colectivo

Cultivando el Cuidado Personal

21 y 28 de julio, y 4 de agosto

Usar el movimiento para mejorar su sanación y bienestar

A Time for Me

July 7 and 14

A workshop to practice mindfulness

La Cultura Cura

June 22 and 29, July 20 and 27, and August 24 and 31

Intergenerational social support group that centers Latina women and Latinx femmes in connecting, healing, and learning together

Cultivating Self-Care Skills

July 21 and 28, and August 4

Using movement to improve your sense of health and well-being

Sister Circle

Programs for Black women and women of color

Life-Giving Gardening

Co-sponsored by Cultivate Charlottesville

Discover the healing power of planting and harvesting, and make connections between gardening, our mental health, and the health of our community.

Emotional Emancipation Circle

Black women are invited to join this culturally grounded support group to help heal and end the trauma from the lie of Black inferiority. This circle will be a liberatory space of not only surviving but thriving and deepening our understanding of the impact of historical forces on our sense of self-worth, our relationships, and our communities.

More information on dates and other Sister Circle mind/body and arts & connection offerings in development are available on our website.

For information on all our group counseling and social support programs, please visit thewomensinitiative.org/groups-social-support.