

FROM CLASSROOM TO COMMUNITY

Free mental health care clinic aims to expand services

THEORIES AND PRACTICE MODELS COVERING TOPICS RANGING FROM CRISIS INTERVENTION to case management are standard fare in MU's master of social work program.

Still, it's outside the classroom that those theories come to life for social work graduate student Shelby Barber. Barber works at the MU Integrative Behavioral Health Clinic (IBHC) for several hours each week as she pursues her master's degree, connecting clients with resources and providing counseling under the direct supervision of licensed clinical social workers. She marvels at the relief often expressed by clients after a single visit to the clinic.

"I think it's just pretty incredible to see the impact we're making," Barber says. "A lot of our clients—they really needed these services."

OPENING DOORS TO RESOURCES

The Integrative Behavioral Health Clinic opened September 2014 within the MU Family Impact Center at 105 E. Ash St. in Columbia, Missouri, housed on the same floor as the free, student-operated MedZou Community Health Clinic. The IBHC provides free behavioral health care between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. each Thursday to adults who are either uninsured or underinsured and unable to afford mental health services.

The brainchild of the MU School of Social Work faculty members Rebekah Freese and Kelli Canada, the IBHC responds to a need initially pinpointed by MedZou workers who sought help treating patients they diagnosed with mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. Indeed, some 41 percent of IBHC's clients are referred to the clinic by MedZou, says Freese, who serves with Canada as clinic co-director. Others find IBHC through service agencies and organizations throughout the community, or by word-of-mouth, she says. The IBHC accepts walk-in clients as well as those with appointments.

IBHC SERVICES

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS COVER:	PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL GROUPS FOCUSING ON:	BRIEF THERAPY:	SUPPORT GROUPS FOCUSING ON:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Resource deficits • Other health needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding your diagnosis • Coping skills training • Substance abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) • Motivational interviewing • Family therapy • Solution-focused therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief and loss • Parenting • Chronic pain



IBHC SUPPORTER, MORTY LEBEDUN AND STAFF AT THE 1 YEAR CELEBRATION AND OPEN HOUSE FOR THE IBHC IN SEPTEMBER 2015.

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KELLI CANADA

About 1½ years after opening, those clients numbered more than 80 people, clinic records show. With undergraduate social work students acting as clinical assistants and graduate students providing supervised clinical services, IBHC staff members complete a comprehensive needs assessment and devise a treatment plan for each client, Freese says. Clients receive free treatment for as long as necessary. It's a service with a scope unique within Boone County, to the best of Canada and Freese's knowledge.

Mental health services—helping clients with depression, anxiety or substance abuse,

for example—comprise about 85 percent of the clinic's work, Freese says. The remaining 15 percent consists of case management, in which IBHC clinical assistants connect clients to programs and agencies that can help with problems such as poverty or homelessness.

"I love the giving back," says Canada, adding, "It's true to the mission of my social work profession and the mission of the University."

GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Also slated to expand within the year is the number of MU schools with students working at the clinic. The university's Sinclair School of Nursing, the MU Counseling Psychology Program and the MU School of Medicine's psychiatry department all have been invited to add students from their specialties to the roster of those providing free services, Freese says.

"It's a wonderful learning opportunity," Freese agrees. "They're learning skills in a classroom, and then they're able to apply it in a very structured environment."