Seattle Counseling Service is a non-profit, community-based behavioral health organization dedicated to promoting health and wellness across Seattle and King County for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer community since 1969. We are committed to providing accessible services to all of our community members.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from Ann</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from Victor</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Christine</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs &amp; Services</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Outcomes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Gretchen</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Services Accessible</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Finances</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 Donors</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors &amp; Leadership</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our agency is a state licensed community mental health agency and substance use disorder outpatient treatment facility. All clinical staff members hold master’s level degrees or higher and are credentialed mental health professionals.
WELCOME TO SCS

Founded in 1969, Seattle Counseling Service is proud to be the oldest LGBTQIA-focused community mental health agency in the world.

Started as part of the Dorian Society in Seattle, SCS later expanded to become an independent organization in 1969. We began in a rented house with one telephone and several volunteers who were ready to answer the phone, talk with people who dropped by, and offer counsel and support. Over the last 50 years, we have sought ways to provide a continuum of care for clients. SCS works with other King County Mental Health Providers to advocate on behalf of the LGBTQIA community in the mental health system. We are incredibly proud of the resource SCS has become to our communities. We are now so much more than a counseling center. Our services have expanded to include substance use disorder services; support groups; harm reduction programs; HIV prevention programs; peer-led outreach; and, immigrant, refugee, and undocumented outreach. We’ve listened to how your needs have changes, and we are always working to grow and better adapt to meet them. Through these changes, we are still committed to providing high-quality, accessible, culturally competent care to all that seek our services and to serve, advocate, educate, and advance the health and wellness of our LGBTQIA community.

WE BEGAN IN A RENTED HOUSE WITH ONE TELEPHONE AND SEVERAL VOLUNTEERS WHO WERE READY TO ANSWER THE PHONE, TALK WITH PEOPLE WHO DROPPED BY, AND OFFER COUNSEL AND SUPPORT.

MISSION

Seattle Counseling Service is a community resource that advocates, educates, and serves to advance the social well being and behavioral health of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender communities.

We welcome all people, but our historical focus on serving the LGBTQ community has not wavered since our inception in 1969.

We strive to remove barriers in access to care for all identities. We are committed to providing service that is respectful to the dignity and independence of people of all abilities, socio-economic standing, ethnicity, and immigration status.

Being community-based and client-centered is important to us. We work to provide healing and be part of the fabric that connects and strengthens our beautiful community.
LETTER FROM ANN

OVER 22 YEARS DEDICATED TO SERVICE

2020 was a heck of a year – indeed. The global pandemic was relentless, impacting all of us in a myriad of ways. I’m deeply grateful to our amazing staff who pivoted to a new way of providing culturally competent behavioral health care in a few days, as the pandemic hit our community. I’m very proud of the fact that we were able to continue to provide care consistently and effectively, despite the ravages of COVID-19. The demand for services was unrelenting and we at SCS were able to continue to provide care consistently and effectively, despite the ravages of COVID-19. The demand for services was unrelenting and we at SCS were able to meet that need, as the response to the pandemic brought a significant increase in behavioral health symptoms and distress for our LGBTQIA community members.

Across the country and here in Seattle/King County, we all witnessed the tragic death of George Floyd and the resulting outrage from the public. Although it was not a singular, unique event, as so many BIPOC community members have suffered and died at the hands of the police, it was a tipping point for so many, in the struggle for civil rights. My deep hope is that this tragic event was a wakeup call for us all, the white folks, who need to make change in our society, to ensure the end to institutionalized racism.

SCS weathered a lot of change over the course of the year – in addition to responding to racial injustice and a global pandemic; SCS moved into a new location which increases our accessibility to all LGBTQIA community members, rebuilt our amazing leadership team, added gifted clinical and administrative staff, increased our Board of Directors with new voices and perspectives and sought out and received additional resources to allow us to increase our access to care for those most in need.

Looking toward the future for SCS – there are some wonderful opportunities ahead as we work to integrate physical healthcare with behavioral health, continue to meet to ever-increasing demand for culturally competent and consistent care through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion, advocate for the complex and multi-layered needs of our beloved LGBTQIA community, and ensure our sustainability as a resource that is flexible and responsive to the emerging needs of our community. Lastly, it is important for us to remain a “safe haven” for all of our community members in need of support and care.

I am truly grateful to each and every one of you, as you have continued to support SCS throughout this most challenging year. Your support of this organization is paramount as we continue to make our way forward. Thank you so much for referring folks to us, making financial gifts to us, being our cheerleaders out in community, and supporting us in this vital, mission-driven work. We couldn’t do this without you!

And, finally I want to take a personal moment to share my own journey. I have retired from SCS, effective this Spring of 2021. I’ve had the privilege and honor of serving as the Executive Director of SCS for over 22 years. There have been lots of change and challenge over those years – and lots of growth and amazing, humbling experiences as well. I’m incredibly proud of this organization – I believe this work is truly sacred work. Thank you for supporting SCS and me on this journey. I’m excited to know Victor Loo is taking up the role of President and CEO – he embodies commitment, dedication and brilliance as a leader. I’m grateful to leave SCS in his very capable, competent, loving hands.

Best,
ATM

Ann McGettigan
Former Executive Director
Seattle Counseling Service
Ann has spent her decades-long career dedicated to the mission of Seattle Counseling service. Under Ann’s leadership, SCS has solidified its place as one of the leading LGBTQIA+ resources in the Puget Sound.
WELCOME NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO

MEET VICTOR LOO

Loo is a first-generation immigrant from Singapore and brings expertise in the management of behavioral health services and social determinants of health to the agency. He most recently worked at Asian Counseling and Referral Service as its Director of Practice Innovation and Interim Director of Recovery Services.

I am excited, humbled and filled with gratitude to join Seattle Counseling Service as the President and CEO, and it is an honor to be the successor of Ann McGettigan after her 22 years of leadership. As a first-generation immigrant and gender non-conforming individual, I place equity and social justice front and centered in my heart.

The pandemic has affected all of us personally and professionally. We learn that we cannot prepare for what we cannot anticipate, and we need to be adaptive, nimble and resilient. During this time, SCS adapts and continues to provide behavioral health and social determinants of health services for the LGBTQIA clients who have increased needs for services. Telehealth becomes an integral part of the work that we do, so we can ensure that our services can continue to be accessible to our clients. While telehealth is accessible for many, we recognize that this can be a barrier for some clients, and we are working to provide in-person services safely for those who need them.

Beyond the pandemic, the King County Behavioral Health system has also undergone payment reform that impacted all behavioral health providers, where providers need to modify service delivery model to ensure stability and sustainability. 2020 has been a challenging year, and I want to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues, friends, and peers at SCS who continue to focus on competent and quality care for the vulnerable clients we serve.

“Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass but learning how to dance in the rain.” — This quote reminds me of how critical the ongoing support is that SCS receives from the community, particularly during these economically challenging times, and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic to stabilize and sustain services that clients rely on as the Country moves towards economic recovery. SCS is the oldest organization that provides LGBTQIA mental health care in the country at over 50 years, and I know we will continue to thrive when we work together with the support from our community, donors and stakeholders.

My hope is SCS will evolve our service model to enhance existing services, but also expand to serve more BIPOC LGBTQIA clients, and other vulnerable community members including immigrants and refugees, homeless/unsheltered and criminal justice involved individuals. With integrated managed care, SCS can partner and develop primary care services to allow seamless care for our clients. More importantly, we want to focus on DEI to advocate, elevate and lead with equity.

Best,

Victor Loo
President and CEO
Seattle Counseling Service

“2020 HAS BEEN A CHALLENGING YEAR, AND I WANT TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO MY COLLEAGUES, FRIENDS, AND PEERS AT SCS WHO CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON COMPETENT AND QUALITY CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE CLIENTS WE SERVE.”
CHRISTINE DEE
SCS BOARD MEMBER

“ I SEE SCS AS ONE CONDUIT FOR CULTIVATING THAT INTERDEPENDENCE OF CONNECTION, BELONGING, AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER – AND DOING THAT IN A WAY THAT CHERISHES OUR GLORIOUS DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN TRYING TO CONTAIN THEM.”

How did you first hear about SCS?
In 2001, I needed an internship to fulfill a requirement for grad school and SCS was on the list of agencies with internship positions. Though I had been out for many years, I had never really been involved in the LGBTQIA+ community, and I considered that this would be a good learning stretch for me.

What motivated you to become a board member for SCS?
I was grateful for my experience as an intern – the caliber of supervision, growth and learning were exceptional. As a former intern, I understood the vital need for the services the agency provides as well as the incredibly high quality of providers the agency attracts.

Why is it important for you to volunteer your time in this way?
It’s all about community and connection. My life is enriched by the fellowship I feel with other Board members and Leadership, but also the sense of belonging I feel by contributing to a larger community.

How do your experiences impact how you show up as a board member? How do you use your position to champion change?
I don’t know if I am a champion of change, as much as an advocate for cohesiveness in our community – and that’s community within the Board, within the agency, and in our larger community. I come from a rural community in the South where interdependence is strongly valued.

What do you hope to accomplish as a board member with SCS within the next year?
There are some big challenges ahead of us. As we onboard new leadership, we will have to be very mindful of our fiscal health, given new pay structures.

What would you like people to know about the work of SCS?
I’d like people to know how heartfully the clinicians and staff are engaged in the work, and that it is a deeply personal dedication filled with intention, devotion, and constant ongoing learning.
We help individuals and adult families with everything from single episode to mild to severe persistent mental illnesses. There are many reasons that people decide to go into therapy. Some of us need help managing depression, anxiety or severe mental illness. Sometimes we need support as we go through a major transition or begin to explore our identity. Sometimes we just want outside perspective and insight. Mental health counseling is a step towards making positive change, no matter what kind of help you're looking for.

"IT WAS SUCH A WEIGHT OFF MY SHOULDERS KNOWING THAT I HAD SOMEONE WHO HAD MY BACK. THEY WEREN'T JUDGING ME. I HAD A BASE AND A SUPPORT SYSTEM."

-Anonymous Client

Whether it's relationships, coming out, gender identity, addiction, or you're not really sure where to begin, Seattle Counseling Service is here for you when you're ready.

At SCS, all counseling is LGBTQIA-affirmative and is conducted in an atmosphere free from homophobia, cissexism, prejudice, fear, and ignorance.

SCS offers a complete substance use disorder outpatient treatment program specifically designed to meet the needs of LGBTQIA individuals and their families. Our services are built on a harm reduction model to ensure an individual's needs are being met no matter where they are on their path to recovery.

We are fully licensed and certified by the Washington State Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery. All treatment sessions are completely confidential and are provided by licensed Substance Use Disorder Professionals and supervised Substance Use Disorder Professional Trainees. All counselors have experience and training in working with LGBTQIA clients.
OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

SUPPORT GROUPS

SCS support groups can help by providing a place to discuss your feelings, share information, and talk with peers and other members of our LGBTQIA community. Our support groups range from trans masculine support, QTPOC support, relationship skills, support for SA survivors, and nutrition. Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, all support groups have been conducted virtually.

CONSULTATION & TRAINING

Our staff are experts in issues relating to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community and can also speak generally or specifically about mental health and chemical dependency. We collaborate with community groups, schools, businesses, and other organizations to provide speakers and trainers on these topics.

PROJECT NEON

The Needle and Sex Education Outreach Network is a peer-led outreach HIV-prevention program for LGBTQIA individuals affected by intravenous (IV) drug use and is centered on a harm-reduction model. Peer educators are current or former crystal users who are equipped to provide education, one-to-one needle exchange, and safer sex practices to others who use crystal and other IV drugs in their communities.

IRUO PROGRAM

The Immigrant, Refugee, and Undocumented Outreach Program is a community education and advocacy program working to increase and improve access to culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health services to IRU community members. The program addresses how local service agencies can work in collaboration with community partners to eliminate barriers and improve access to services for these members of our community.

HASAP

Hepatitis AIDS Substance Abuse Program is a compassionate harm-reduction and outreach program aimed to serve folks living with hepatitis, HIV, or are at higher-risk for either. These free services center around meeting the individual where they are, whether it’s talking for ten minutes or setting ten sessions, helping the individual navigate their options, and the healthcare system as needed.
Our approach to serving and supporting our clients and community may have looked different in 2020 as we responded, accommodated, and adjusted to the unique needs and challenges that were presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, but our commitment to keeping our clients, staff, and community healthy both physically and mentally was unwavering. We are especially grateful and appreciative of our staff during this challenging transition.

"SCS and the people here have helped me come to the point where I have greater faith in myself and more hope for my future than I can ever remember having before."

-Anonymous Client
What has the transition been like for both you and your clients going from in-person sessions to Telehealth?

Transferring to telehealth was fraught with technical and logistical challenges. As clients and I have adapted to our now separate but shared environments, I think we’ve embraced the comforts that being at home has offered. Clients rarely have to travel long distances, interact with public transit, or move in frustrating weather.

What has been the most surprising thing for you about virtual therapy?

One of the most surprising things to witness through our transition to virtual therapy is my own literal, emotional “lag.” Just like our audio/video can be out of sync, it truly takes me longer to feel the impact of clients’ emotions and statements, when the Before Times of being in-person would be much more immediate.

How have you been caring for yourself during this time/what has gotten you through this difficult time?

The key is variety. Having routine is useful to remember which days to shower; but trying new hobbies, staggering weekly events, and switching up daily tasks has provided a dose of the invigoration I feel I’d normally get from living a pandemic-free life. Otherwise, dousing myself in things I love has maintained some level of livability: singing and dancing to my favorite music, regular physical activity, video games, and virtual/distanced social engagements have been non-negotiable anchors.

“AS CLIENTS AND I HAVE ADAPTED TO OUR NOW SEPARATE BUT SHARED ENVIRONMENTS, I THINK WE’VE EMBRACED THE COMFORTS THAT BEING AT HOME HAS OFFERED.”

What is one of your favorite grounding exercises you recommend to clients that anyone can do from home?

Practice bringing your attention to any “seam” of a room, like where the ceiling meets the wall or the wall meets the floor, and follow it around the entire room very, very slowly. This helps us see that we can direct our attention, even if we can’t control the associations our brains will inevitably make to things. Otherwise, building ritual that helps you center your day around something other than work (or other energy drainers) can be super helpful. For me, checking my daily horoscopes and forecasts builds meaning for my day outside of external structures.

What advice would you give to others who are navigating the unique challenges of the pandemic right now?

Surviving as a human right now is utterly exhausting. Be gentle with others, and most importantly with yourself. Any act of love you can do for yourself today is enough.
**KEEPPING SERVICES ACCESSIBLE**

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

You probably know that your donation will help SCS continue to provide affordable mental health and addiction recovery counseling to the Seattle LGBTQIA community. But you may not know that SCS absorbs the cost of many other services such as providing crisis intervention, harm reduction services & supplies, educational consultations & trainings, outreach and general community support. Thanks to the support of our great supporters like you, SCS has continued to advocate, educate, and advance the social well-being and behavioral health of our LGBTQIA community for over 50 years. We hope you consider making a contribution this pride month to ensure we can continue this work.

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<th>Amount</th>
<th>Monthly Rate</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$4.58</td>
<td>An Individual Sliding-Scale Session with a Caring, Competent Therapist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$8.33</td>
<td>Covers Two Group Sessions for an Individual Struggling to Overcome an Addiction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$155</td>
<td>$12.91</td>
<td>Puts a Client on the Path to Recovery with a Chemical Dependency Assessment.</td>
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<td>$250</td>
<td>$20.83</td>
<td>Pays for Three Sessions of Crisis Intervention to Victims of Intimate Partner Violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$41.66</td>
<td>A Year of Educational Print Materials on Relevant Mental Health Issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>$83.33</td>
<td>Comprehensive Psych Eval and One Year of Medication Management Appointments.</td>
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**SHOPPING ON AMAZON?**
You can link SCS as your charity of choice to donate 0.5% of every purchase back to our services.

**SUPPORT NOW**
Click here to make your Pride Month donation.
SUMMARY OF FINANCES

2020 REVENUE
GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS $ 3,982,367
COVID FUNDING $ 897,838
PROGRAM FEES $ 278,067
FUNDRAISING $ 407,275
OTHER INCOME $ 9,098
INVESTMENT INCOME $ 288,559
TOTAL REVENUE $ 5,863,205

2020 EXPENSES
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES $ 4,153,503
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES $ 328,569
OTHER PROGRAM SERVICES $ 658,618
ADMINISTRATION $ 413,332
FUNDRAISING $ 72,050
TOTAL EXPENSES $ 5,626,062
2020 DONORS

Seattle Counseling Service extends its appreciation to all of the individuals, families, businesses, and corporations that have generously supported our organization in 2020.

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

JAROD ADAIR
ANONYMOUS
LYNDSY ATKINS
MICHAEL AUCH & SCOTT CARLEY
WAYNE BITTERMAN
JEFF & ARDELL BRANDENBURG
PAUL BRITTON
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PERKINS COIE FOUNDATION
SCHWAB CHARITABLE
STOUP BREWING
UNITED WAY OF KING COUNTY
UNITED WAY OF PIERCE COUNTY
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Danie Eagleton
Vice President & Chief Clinical Officer

Deidre McHugh, ARNP
Medical Director

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Finance Director

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Danny Waxwing
If you would like to apply for services or are seeking other resources, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are here for you.