



2022

Annual Report



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From the Director's Desk



Sitting down to write my letter to you all, I spent time listening to some of the world's greatest inspirational speeches, in the hopes that I may find some uplifting words of wisdom to share. I listened to Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, Winston Churchill, Madeleine Albright and President Obama. What I learned from each person, in some fashion, was that life is what we design it to be. I was reminded that we are the masters of our fate, and choices are ours to make; and from Jeremy Webber I remember his powerful writing that hope is not 'a' strategy, it is the 'only' strategy. This has stayed with me since I read the title and subsequent paper.

Hope... what our agency is founded on. In title and, most importantly, in spirit and philosophy. But, hope, without planning and thought, strategy, energy and most of all passion, is not enough. **Hope**, noun. a feeling of expectation and a desire for a certain thing to happen. This is what we at Aspen Hope Center attempt to instill in everyone we meet. Those who are stagnant or in pain are void of the positive feelings that something good can happen. Those who are depressed, outcast, alone, these individuals lack hope. This is a tragedy. However, as many have written, hope without action is not helpful. In fact, Jeremy Webber states that "any strategy that only espouses high ideals without at least laying the groundwork for turning that strategy into reality is fruitless at best and hazardous at worst." I wholeheartedly agree.

For thirteen years, those of us who are the heart and soul of Aspen Hope Center have kept hope, passion, dedication and heart be our guide as we plan, connect and watch people heal as the outcome. We believe with all we are that good is out there in everyone and that good things can happen if we work together, connect with one another, learn from others and own our strengths and weaknesses. Connect is a word that is as important to us as hope. Because as humans, we are social creatures wired for connection. Healthy connection creates relationships and relationships build our social nets and social nets keep us afloat and moving forward.

Aspen Hope Center was named in 2010 and I truly do not believe that the impact of the name, nor the people who were working, or services established would blossom into what it is today. A simple yet powerful word, **hope**, has been embraced and embodied in the center of each staff member's actions. **Hope** has been what those in pain and darkness have found when they were not even sure what they were seeking. **Hope**, the feeling or expectation of something. I feel; I hope, that each person in our valley can find the time to look to our mountains and sky and breathe in strength. Strength to help others who cannot go it alone, strength to accept help if it is offered, strength to ask for help if help is needed, strength to see that asking for help is a sign of courage and not weakness and strength to know that healing and change can hurt and healing can take time.

Our vow at the Hope Center is that we are always here and you are never alone. We are dedicated to **connect** with people and help them to **connect** to others. We look through the dark emotions and find the **strength** in everyone we encounter. YOU make this all possible for us to do. Thank YOU for your belief in us, thank YOU for your **hope** that we can **connect** with others and help them **heal**.

Michelle Muething

Mission, Vision & Values

ASPEN HOPE CENTER IS A MISSION-DRIVEN AGENCY

OUR MISSION

Aspen Hope Center's mission is to extend **a beacon of hope** to those in emotional crisis and offer a **continuum of care** while steadfastly working to decrease the stigma of mental illness through **expert clinical treatment, public education, community collaboration and outreach.**

OUR VALUES

- **Act with integrity**
- **Demonstrate compassion**
- **Work in collaboration**
- **Be fearless**



OUR PROMISE

To stand on our values everyday and own when we fall short. We vow to meet people where they are and know that each person is unique and has different morals, beliefs and capacity within them. Above all else, to remember that people are human and deserve to be treated with respect and compassion, and always be given a chance to start over tomorrow.

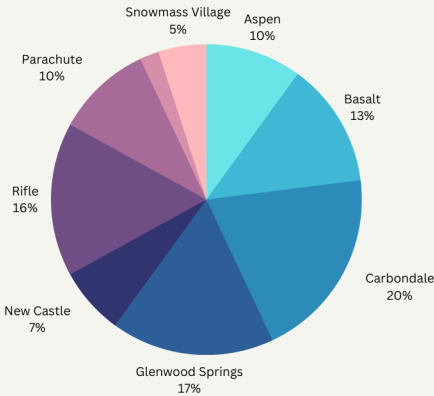


Program Overview: Crisis

Aspen Hope Center's mobile crisis and co-response team began serving the community in 2010. Immediate availability twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; connection to resources; continuity and follow through is what make Aspen Hope Center's crisis services distinct.

A combination of subjective and objective measures help to provide a guide for how our clients are doing and if they are finding success in resolving their crises; however, our strongest measures of success in the crisis arena are found in our ability to continue providing crisis services within 15 to 30 minutes of receiving a phone call, preventing people from being transported to the hospital and continuing to divert individuals from in-patient hospitalization by implementing stabilization services in the community. Though our first responders are our biggest partner, being able to take over a scene and relieve law enforcement and EMS back into service and conduct a crisis assessment in privacy is crucial.

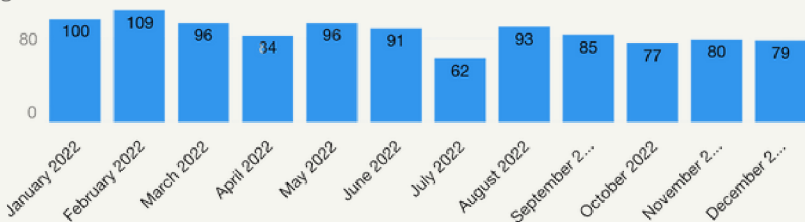
Serving Aspen to Parachute; responding to schools, doctor offices, homes and street corners, the crisis team works the frontline to help people find hope when they feel none exists.



The graph to the left shows the location breakdown of where clients who reach out to the Aspen Hope Center reside.

Approximately 70% of those served were Caucasian, 28% Latino and 2% multiracial, Pacific Islander or Asian. With the addition of bicultural staff at the Hope Center, our goal is to reach more of our Hispanic community.

The graph below shows the number of crisis evaluations from each month. February was the busiest month for our crisis team with 109 new individuals being served.



Program Overview: Crisis

11%

of community members who had a crisis assessment were hospitalized into a psychiatric facility in either Grand Junction or Denver. This means that 89% of those seen were successfully stabilized and able to be placed on a safety plan or connected with local resources for follow up support.

New community members served in a time of despair

1052

27

Fatality calls were received where tragedy struck and more than 300 people were supported and/or followed with debriefings

In one calendar year, crisis clinicians responded to 559 requests for assistance on scene. They went out in every condition from snow to sun, morning, afternoon and middle of the night. They respond when they are called.

559

24

was the average number of minutes it took a crisis clinician to respond on scene when called. This is in our response footprint of Aspen to Parachute.

The number of total follow ups done for all clients who presented in a time of need. After a crisis, clinicians stay connected until the person has resources for healing.

2125

186

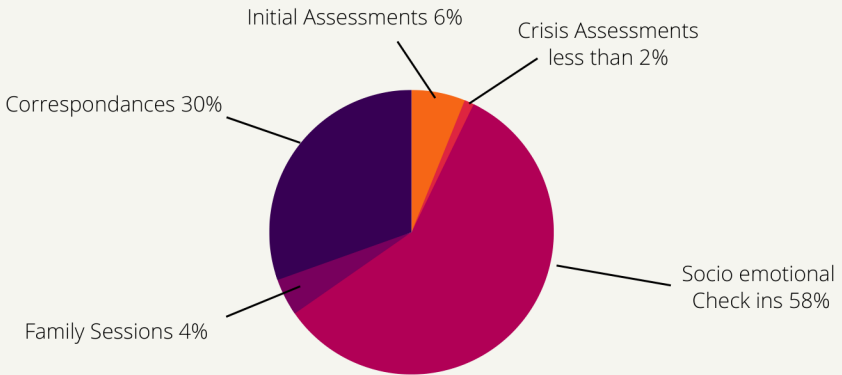
The number of total follow ups done for all clients who presented in a time of need. After a crisis, clinicians stay connected until the person has solid resources for healing.

Program Overview: School

One of our proudest achievements has been the expansion of our school-based mental health program. The program works upstream, with the goal always being to catch children prior to a crisis. Data shows that the number of children who are in crisis in the schools where we have clinicians is drastically less than in the schools where clinicians are not housed, and success is seen in a reduced number of kids going into an acute life-threatening crisis. Launched with just one clinician in 2011, this robust program has grown substantially with 14 school-based clinicians in place in 2022 in order to meet the needs of our valley's schools. This has been a program we have stated was our "accidental success" as it was not planned, but in the past twelve, through the dedication and passion of staff it has grown with intention and strategy and is now being looked at as a valley wide option for care for our youth.


January 1 through December 31, 2022
Total Student and Clinician Interactions

10.154




Program Overview: School


HIGHLIGHTS


 In January of 2022, our school-based mental health program held 12 clinicians. In the spring and summer of 2022, additional funding was secured and new clinicians hired for the 2022-2023 school year, growing the program to hold 14 clinicians.


 Contracts were formalized to ensure full-time coverage at Aspen Community School, Glenwood Springs Elementary School and Sopris Elementary School.


 In addition to the team of school-based clinicians, we have a bilingual/bicultural program support specialist and a graduate social work intern who support our services for children and families in our valley's schools.


 In August, we started serving Yampah Mountain High School and St. Stephen Catholic School with a full-time clinician based at each school.

 We continued to offer high-quality supervision for social workers and licensed counselors.

 Staff participated in a wide range of professional development including Focused Kids training, Perinatal Mental Health 101, Winter Words with Bessel Van DerKolk, Seedlings Facilitator Certification (to support parents in breaking the generational cycle of trauma), CAMS training, ADHD training, Mastering the Art of Parent Engagement, Grief counseling for children and adolescents, ACT Bootcamp, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Crisis 101 and Reducing educational exclusion (the intersection of trauma and discipline).

 In collaboration with experts on our team and community partners, our staff participated in trainings in suicidality, depression and anxiety in youth, gender supports, queer*LGBTQIA+, equity, hope and Healing (a trauma-informed classroom training), restorative practices, harm reduction, Internet safety and grief counseling and services.

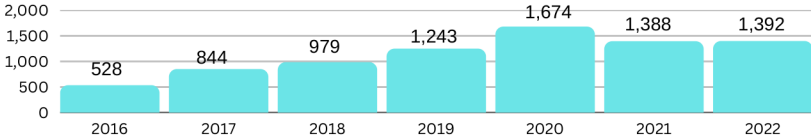
 A wide range of community trainings were offered - please refer to page 10 of this report for details.

 We launched a sponsorship/partnership with Andy Zanca Youth Empowerment Program. This allows us to support the program, as well as to engage with youth and incorporate their feedback into our programs.

Program Overview: Therapy

With the exception of 2020 -- in the height of Covid -- 2022 brought the greatest need for therapy services. With several therapists in place, the program continued to grow and allowed us to better support the needs in our community.

Year-over-year Sessions

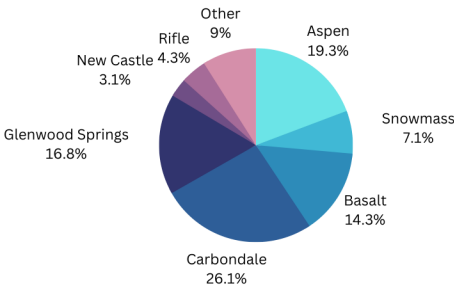


2022 Stats

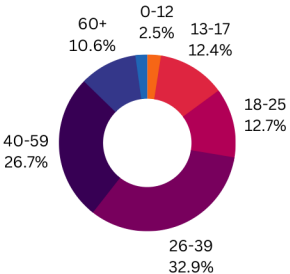


Our therapy fee is \$150/session (which is on the low end in the Roaring Fork Valley). However, in order to remove barriers to care, individuals have the option to pay on a sliding scale based on their circumstances. Out of the 1,392 sessions held by Aspen Hope Center therapists in 2022, over 50 percent were provided at a discounted rate or pro bono. Nearly 50 of those sessions were provided completely free of charge, with more than \$22,000 supplemented to cover costs for those who could not afford to pay the full rate. These sessions allowed individuals and families to get the support they need to help cope with life's struggles without the added financial stress.

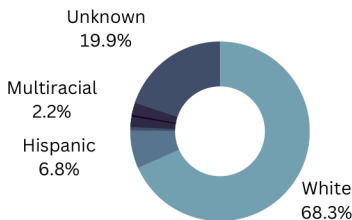
Place of Residence



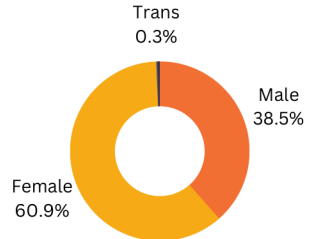
Age



Ethnicity



Gender



Program Overview: Therapy

Aspen Hope Center is proud to employ several therapists who bring a wide range of expertise to meet the needs of our community. Collectively, they specialize in a variety of areas including trauma/PTSD, death/dying/grief and loss, divorce, parenting, child/adolescent issues, life transitions, work/life balance, conflict resolution, sports psychology and more. They are able to serve individuals via many modalities including Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Family Systems Therapy, Integrative Therapy, Marital/Couples Relationship Therapy, Wilderness Therapy, Narrative Therapy and more.

Spotlight on Mommy Matters

A support group for new and new-ish moms

Sponsored by Aspen Hope Center and facilitated by licensed psychotherapist Mia Wilson, **Mommy Matters** is a social group for newer moms and their little ones that has been in existence for 12 years. The group provides a chance for new mothers from up and down the valley to relax and socialize with other moms and their little ones, while enjoying a chance to chat about motherhood. Mommy Matters gathers on the first and third Thursdays of each month. Meetings are held in person when possible and virtually if necessary.

Benefits of being a part of Mommy Matters include:

- Support for challenging times and phases
- Access to resources regarding child development and behavior
- Space to laugh at the absurdities that are a normal part of parenting
- Exchange of favorite "tricks of the trade"
- Answers to burning questions about feeding, sleeping, self-care and more
- Connections with other great moms
- Social opportunities for the little ones

"Mommy Matters gave me a community during a time I felt very isolated. The women I met here were going through, or had gone through, many of the same challenges I was currently facing. I felt very supported. It's no surprise that mothers continue to attend Mommy Matters long after the diaper stage has passed!" - Mommy Matters participant



Program Overview: Education & Outreach

As the only agency to establish a programmatic arm of service that provides mental health education on a year-round basis, Aspen Hope Center believes that, in order to reduce stigma and increase awareness, ongoing, engaging and consistent education must be provided. If people can be made aware of resources, the hope is that they will reach out prior to a time of crisis and know what resources are available if things ever seem hopeless. We offer trainings on suicide awareness, resilience and growth, crisis avoidance and de-escalation and neurobiology of stress, to name only a few. Not only is the education arm geared toward community education, it also focuses on children in all schools regardless of whether or not a clinician is housed there. This serves as another means of connecting in the schools, even for those that have not yet secured funding to staff a clinician.

In 2022, we were thrilled to expand upon our existing relationships and build new partnerships in order to educate more people in our community than ever before. We continually receive requests for training and appreciate that people are eager to learn and acquire the tools to help provide support for others. We are proud to show up in various settings and for a wide range of audiences.



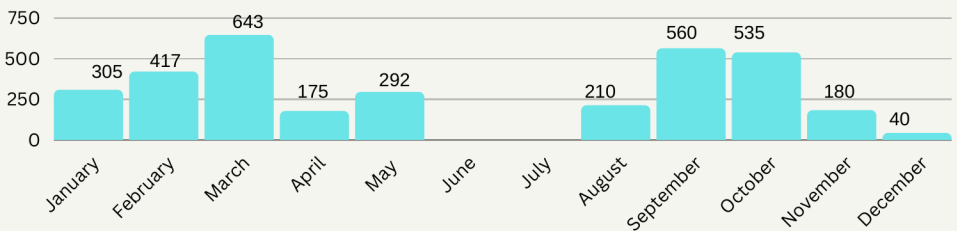
Estimated Individuals Trained

3,357

Trainings Held

48

Estimated Individuals Trained by Month



In all of the thirteen years, Aspen Hope Center has been providing education and outreach to the individuals in the valley, 2022 held the most people trained in one year!

Program Overview: Education & Outreach

School-aged Students Trained in We Can Talk

- Aspen Middle School (Grades 5-8)
- Aspen High School (Grades 9-12)
- Basalt Middle School (Grades 7-8)
- Basalt High School (All-school meeting)
- Carbondale Community School (Grades 7-8)
- Carbondale Middle School (Grade 7)
- Glenwood Springs High School (Grades 9-10)
- Coal Ridge High School (Wellness Week Presentations, Grades 9-12)
- Bridges High School

Parent Trainings

- We Can Talk (Aspen School District/Aspen Theater)
- Coffee Talk (Roaring Fork Schools' middle schools/virtual)
- Tea with Parents and We Can Talk (Two Rivers Community School)
- We Can Talk (Ambleside Private School in New Castle, Re-2/Rifle parents)

Trainings Offered for School and Community Partners

- Youth Mental Health First Aid for Stepping Stones, Re-2, Re-1
- "A mother's Grief" Movie and Panel Discussion (Colorado Mountain College)
- Aspen Hope Center services for Rifle Police Department, Re-2
- Back-to-school Event (Carbondale Middle School)
- Presentation on support in our schools for River Bridge
- The "S word" Community Panel with Garfield County (Colorado Mountain College)
- Mental Health Training: Suicidology in Youth: RFSD Mental Health Team
- Depression and Anxiety in Youth: RFSD Mental Health Team

Other Community Events

- Coal Ridge Wellness Week
- Andy Zanca Youth Empowerment Program (We Can Talk)
- Peruvian Connection
- Walk the Talk Youth Leadership Group/All-school Meeting (Colorado Rocky Mountain School)
- Buddy Program Training
- 9 News Health Fair (Glenwood Springs High School)
- Aspen Recreation Center Health Fair
- Glen X Career Expos (Glenwood Springs High School) and Rifle
- National Night Out (Willits)
- YOU MATTER Fentanyl Poisoning & Overdose Awareness (Crown Mountain Park)
- Hope and Healing (Carbondale Community School and Ross Montessori)
- Out of the Darkness Walk
- Deescalation and Crisis Response Training for RFTA
- Deescalation and Resilience Training for Sunlight Mountain Resort staff
- McBride 'Seeing Silence' Event (Wheeler Opera House)

Major Happenings



A M E R I C A N
ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLGY

Accreditation

Aside from Colorado Crisis Services which operates the state crisis line, Aspen Hope Center is the only crisis agency that holds this honor and employs mobile crisis and co-response clinicians.

First-ever Signature Gala

-Raised \$1.2 million!
-Nearly 200 attendees



New Contracts

-Pitkin County Sheriff's Office, Carbondale Fire and Aspen Fire signed peer support contracts for their officers, fire and EMS staff.



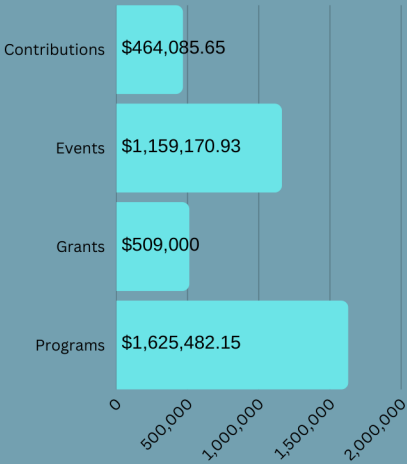
State Involvement

Aspen Hope Center became a member of the Colorado Provider Association and is involved with a multitude of agencies from across the state. Having a voice while reviewing policy and legislation before it becomes law is an honor and privilege.

Aspen Hope Center's Executive Director was also chosen to be a member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Policy Regulations and Standards. Four months in, Michelle was voted in to serve as the Vice Chair of the group, and she helps to lead the way with our mental health hold statute and civil rights advocacy for our community and clients.

Financial Overview

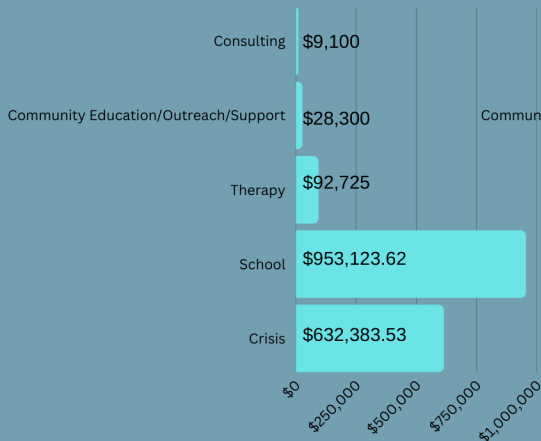
Annual Income



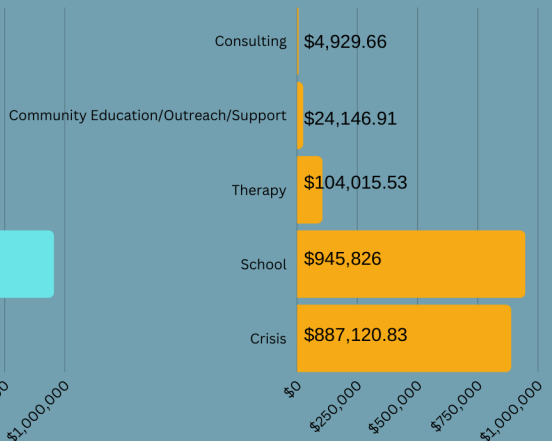
Annual Expenses



Program Income



Program Expenses



Looking Forward

This has been another year of growth and continued strength. We know that 2023 will hold more exciting things on the horizon. A contract has been signed with Aspen School District for the placement of three clinicians in the Aspen Schools. As of August 1, 2023, there will be one clinician placed in each school to serve the children who may need additional socioemotional support. A contract has also been signed with Aspen Valley Hospital to provide behavioral health services to patients who need assistance. This service will begin February 6, 2023. Lastly, the Aspen Hope Center's regional crisis contract with Rocky Mountain Health Plan is being extended to include formal crisis response into Pitkin County as of July 1, 2023.

As we continue to grow our services into father reaches of our valley, we must hire administrative infrastructure to be able to support the front line work. For more than ten years, there was only one administrator covering all roles and the rest were clinical staff working in the community. The addition of a program director and operations director shined a light on the continued need for specialty positioned. In 2023 the Aspen Hope Center will hire a Director of Human Resources and a Development Director. These two positions are vital to support staff as well as agency sustainability and growth.

We know that with expansion into Western Garfield County and Pitkin County we may need office space and more staff. These needs will be assessed as the months progress. The contracts and hiring plans mentioned for 2023 are only the items we have been working on and that we KNOW will come to fruition in the new year. However, every year we are amazed and surprised with things that come our way which we not anticipated. 2023 will most likely be the same. The state of Colorado has many changes happening with regard to mental health and the Aspen Hope Center will always try to remain a voice of the rural community. Speaking with conviction, integrity and ethical values that advocate for the people we serve, we vow to keep our community a place where we all know we can find the services we need exactly when we need them with no barriers or hurdles.

We look forward to sharing more next year and hope that you will continue to support our efforts.

Current Staff & Board

Administration

Michelle Muething, LPC *Executive Director*
Sarah Fedishen LPC, LAC *Program Director*
Natasha Lucero-Conklin *Operations Director*
Stevie Jarrell *System Administrator*
Shanda Grey *Finance Manager*
Lindsay Plant *Finance Manager*
Shawn Kirschner *Development Director*
Julie Ireland *Director of Human Resources*
Sonja Linman, M.Ed., CAS *Community Trainer*

Crisis

Lauren Fouch, LPCC *Crisis Clinician*
Laura Geddes, *Crisis Clinician*
Emily Harpe *Intern*
Christian Jackson, MSW *Crisis Clinician*
Ian Kander, LPC *Crisis Clinician*
Riley McCalister, MD *Crisis Clinician*
Jacob Midkiff *LPC Crisis Clinician*
Karmen Pittenger, LCSW *Crisis Clinician*
Casey Reeman, MA *Crisis Clinician*
Skylar Severson *Crisis Supervisor*
Jillian Standley, LPCC *Crisis Clinician*

School

Rachael Bronk, LCSW *School-based Clinician, Glenwood Springs High School*
Bridget Derkash, LPC, LAC *School-based Clinician, Glenwood Springs Elementary School*
Amelia Dotzenrod, MSW *School-based Clinician, Glenwood Springs Middle School*
Courtney Dunn, LSW *School-based Clinician, Glenwood Springs High School*
Mackenzie Elder, MSW *School-based Clinician, Basalt Elementary School*
Yolanda Gonzales *Graduate Social Work Intern*
Paula Hall, LPC *School-based Clinician, Roaring Fork High School/Supervisor*
Avy Harris, MSW, SWC *School-based Clinician, Basalt Elementary School/Basalt Middle School*
Paul Hassel, LPC, CAC II *School-based Clinician, Sopris Elementary School*
Brandon Jones, MSW, CSWC *School-based Clinician, Basalt Middle School*
Lilia Larkin, LCSW *School-based Clinician, Aspen Community School/Supervisor*
Erin Quinn, LCSW *School-based Clinician, Two Rivers Community School*
Katherine Romero Paguada, LSW *School-based Clinician, Basalt High School*
Tim Wheeler, LPC *School-based Clinician, Riverview School*

Therapy

Kelly Cooper, LPC *Therapist*
Jill Gruenberg *Intern*
Kathryn Henderson, LPC, CAC *Therapist*
Patti Present, LCSW, EdS *Therapist*

Board


Sandy Iglehart *President*
Sallie Bernard *Board Member*
Steven Esrick *Board Member*
Lady Fuller *Secretary*
Jim Geib *Treasurer*
Jim Laing *Board Member*
Cavanaugh O'Leary *Board Member*
Jonathan Shamis *Board Member*
Nancy VanDeMark *Board Member*

Advisory Board

Michael Buglione *Advisory Board Member*
Rabbi Mendel Mintz *Advisory Board Member*
Mindy Nagle *Advisory Board Member*
Jill Shore *Advisory Board Member*



Connect. Hope. Heal.



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24-hour HopeLine:
970-925-5858
970-945-3728