

## Mission Statement for Westchester Citizen Therapists

We are a Westchester-based community of therapists actively working towards social justice and human rights.

Acting as a clearinghouse of information, we seek to support the political activism, advocacy, pro bono works, and self-care of our members and other groups similarly speaking out in opposition to policies and practices that undermine public health or threaten democracy."

## Structure

I. Three arms: Activism and Advocacy; Community Support and Outreach; Therapists' Circle

II. Meetings

General membership-monthly  
Steering and Sub- Committees ad hoc

III. Membership criteria

- A. Identify as being health care practitioners, in broadest sense
- B. Active in either the outreach or the political organizing/activism branch

## Inspiration

- Bill Doherty, Citizen Therapists for Democracy:  

"One thing citizens of democracies do is elect leaders, but the bulk of democratic work occurs in local communities and wider networks of people tackling problems in society. The ideal of democracy, always tarnished and never fully realized in practice, is a voice for everyone and a chance for everyone to contribute. Threats to this kind of inclusion don't just harm the people affected but they tear the fabric of democracy itself. In that light, the key threat of Trumpism is the "othering" of some of the "we" in We the People."
- The Indivisible Guide

## Outline of organization

## I. Activism

### A. Five subcommittees proposed to target specific areas

1. Human rights
  - a. Religious Tolerance/Anti-Defamation
    - b. Undocumented Immigrants/Refugees
    - c. Islamophobia
    - d. African-American Concerns
    - e. LGBTQ Concerns
    - f. Women's Concerns (not covered under health/reproductive rights-see below)
2. Global Responsibility
  - . Environment/natural resources
    - a. Foreign Policy
3. Protection for Families and Community Safety
  - . Gun control
    - a. Bullying/Children's issues
    - b. Education
4. Healthcare Rights
  - . Affordable Care Act
    - a. Mental Health Parity
    - b. Reproductive Rights
    - c. Medicare
    - d. Medicaid
5. Political Action
  - . Mid-term elections
    - i. Local/County/Congressional
    - ii. Swing a nearby district
      - a. Free Press/Fake News Monitoring

### B. Structure

1. Each subcommittee will have a minimum of one leader
2. Responsibilities of the subcommittee heads
  - a. Educate themselves about their issue
  - b. Aggregate critical information
  - c. Determine when to partner with other groups
  - d. Offer action plans to our community
- C. Tasks
  1. Provide action alerts: disseminating opportunities for political activism
  2. Speak out in opposition to policies and practices that undermine public mental health and threaten democracy
  3. Create a forum for sharing articles and information relevant to the political landscape, flagging important policy initiatives and directives

4. Consider criteria for promoting various actions; e.g., basis in science and statistics; consistency with core values of the group; parameters that go beyond personal beliefs

5. Promote collective agency across differences in the public domain

## **II. Community Support and Outreach**

A. Serve as a clearinghouse, informing the membership of outreach opportunities for pro bono services or workshops to communities at risk

B. Vetted information from steering and subcommittees, directed to a designated “secretary” to organize and collate, will be reviewed by the subcommittees and posted. All members may forward any information they may have about community needs to the relevant subcommittee

C. In some instances, subcommittee leaders on the activism front will develop ongoing relationships with particular agencies

D. We do not provide direct services, rather we disseminate relevant information to clinicians who might be willing to independently provide such services

## **III. Therapists’ Circle**

A. We will offer or direct members to support services to promote health, hope, and resilience, thereby reducing risks for anxiety, anger, depression, fear, numbing and other stress responses often experienced when working with traumatized populations or under conditions of perceived threat

B. Informally assess the impact of political climate on clients and practitioners.

C. We may make use of resources developed by others, e.g., the clinical branch of the national Citizen Therapists for Democracy

D. We will promote understanding and common ground in divided communities while respecting differences