

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE: CINDY COUGHLIN

**Michelle Marrone**  
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Called to serve and mission-driven, Cindy Coughlin makes a difference by helping others improve their lives.



**C**indy Coughlin is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor at Catholic Charities in Manchester, New Hampshire. She is a trauma-informed clinician and has a specialty of working with bi-cultural people and families. Cindy received her Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree at Rivier in 2019.

### **When did you feel called to your profession?**

***Cindy:** Around age 13 or 14, I just knew I wanted to be a therapist, specifically, which is interesting because I never had met a therapist in my life. I come from a difficult family background, and I struggled a lot as a teenager. So, I thought, 'If I can use the turmoil I'm experiencing right now to help someone in the future, it'll be worth it ... it became my mission.'*

**Who are your clients and how do you serve them?**

*Cindy: I provide psychotherapy services to people from age 12 all the way up to my oldest clients in their 80s, essentially helping with anxiety, depression, and difficult transitions. I'm really passionate about working with families who struggle with communication. I'm also a trauma-informed clinician and have a specialty of working with bi-cultural people and families. I assist many Spanish-speaking immigrants who are victims or survivors of domestic violence.*

**Why do you choose to work for Catholic Charities?**

*Cindy: Catholic Charities has a holistic approach that I really appreciate. We have mental health counseling services and a host of other things. There's the Immigration Department and a food bank. We do things with veterans, with single mothers; we help with all different types of needs. We see people of all faith backgrounds, and we see people who have no faith background. I love working for a place that addresses the whole person at all stages of their life.*

**How has your Rivier experience supported your success?**

*Cindy: My first year at Riv, I was scared, I was nervous, and I was excited. Almost every professor I had just spoke truth, life, excitement, and hope into me. At the end of my program, I felt like a different person. I felt equipped. Therapy is about 'how do I relate to another human being that's sitting in front of me suffering? How do I meet that person?' A lot of my classes were about that. The courses and professors really helped me to see therapy as a profession, a human profession. They gave me the skills to do what I do.*

**Is your service mission-driven?**

*Cindy: Yes. Rivier's mission is somewhat similar to Catholic Charities' mission, which is to heal, comfort, and empower people to move lives forward. We want people to really experience a change, whether it be at Riv or at Catholic Charities, and then get out there and do amazing stuff. I feel that way with my clients. I tell them, 'You can be with me in therapy as long as you want, but my goal is to transition you out, so you get out there and transform hearts and minds.'*

**What is the biggest challenge for people today?**

*Cindy: From my perspective as a therapist, as a society we're suffering from not being able to connect with the person next to us very well. For example, teenagers on social media are disconnected in an overly connected world. People of all ages are struggling and asking, 'How do I live a fulfilled life within the context of my relationships?' I think as human beings we are meant and called to be in relationship with one another. In today's world, we're losing that; we're suffering from a lack of true connection with other people.*

**How does service make a difference?**

*Cindy: The greatest thing about service, and my particular kind of service in mental health counseling and helping people with their lives, is that it creates long-lasting, generational change. Not just for parents and their children and families, but in all their close relationships. It makes a huge difference. Personally, it gives me a sense of fulfillment, a sense of purpose, and gratitude in my life. It gives me hope on a global scale that change is possible. ■*