



Orientation to Child + Youth Mental Health Services

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A Guide for Families



The F.O.R.C.E.

Families Organized for Recognition and Care Equality
Society for Kids' Mental Health

This orientation was created for the Vancouver child and youth mental health services area. It is intended that this guide can be adapted for other communities as much of the general information is relevant to other service areas.

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In the beginning...

Your child is struggling... Maybe you were the one who noticed... maybe it was your child's teacher...

Regardless, you took the first step and contacted Child and Youth Mental Health Services...



We all want the same thing...

Children sometimes need help when they can't cope...

Child and Youth Mental Health Services provides assessment, treatment and support for families.

In this orientation, we will introduce you to these services and hopefully help smooth the road for you.

This resource was created by parents of the FORCE Society for parents, families and caregivers, in collaboration with Vancouver Child and Youth Mental Health Services.

What is the FORCE Society for Kids' Mental Health?

Who We Are...

We are parents whose children's lives are touched by mental disorders

When We Learned We Weren't Alone...

January 2000...and every day since

Why We Formed a Society...

To ensure mental health care and services are provided to children and youth and to assist their families in finding information and support

www.bckidsmentalhealth.org



Where Can Families Go For Help?

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When your child/youth is not feeling well, most parents initially contact their family doctor. This is a good first step because the family doctor can rule out physical problems that may be contributing to your child's overall health.

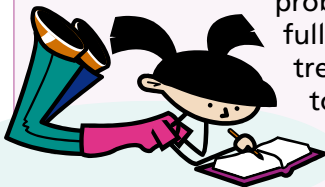
The family doctor may do an assessment and determine that your child requires other services such as those offered by pediatricians, psychiatrists or Child and Youth Mental Health clinicians, or private registered psychologists (www.psychologists.bc.ca or call 1-800-730-0522)

If you don't have a family doctor, you can ask your child's teacher, school counselor or local community health clinic staff for information on appropriate mental health resources and /or contact the Vancouver Child and Youth Mental Health Services Referral Line at 604-709-4111.



Basic Facts About Childhood Mental Health Problems

- Approximately 1 in 5 children and youth in BC have a mental health disorder.
- These disorders are not caused by being a bad parent.
- Mental health problems are treatable. Early detection and intervention are important.
- Parents of children with a mental health problem have a right to be fully involved in their child's treatment. In fact it's critical to successful treatment.





Why is it important for parents to be involved?

Because...

- you love your child and want to be sure that the decisions being made about how to help your child are the right ones.
- your child will benefit greatly from the support you provide.
- you will benefit from a better understanding of your child's difficulties.
- you will be better informed about the plan to help your child.
- you can ask for assistance with how to help your child at home.
- mental health problems affect the whole family —not just the child!
- parents need support too!!!

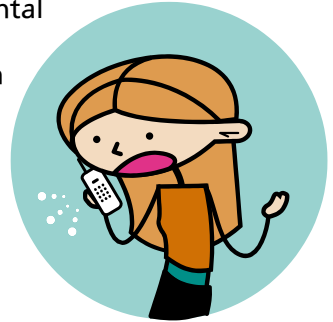


Your time and commitment is important ensuring your child is effectively helped. This may require some work on your part, but will be well worth your time.

Calling Child and Youth Mental Health Services

When you call the Referral Line, the mental health clinician will ask questions about your child's problem. This will help them learn more about your child and the difficulties he or she is facing.

Vancouver uses a central referral line and this means that there is one phone number to call wherever you live in Vancouver.



Vancouver Child and Youth
Mental Health Services Referral Line
604-709-4111

In order to learn more about your child's problems, CYMH uses a screening tool called the Brief Child and Family Phone Interview (BCFPI)—a 30-minute telephone interview.

This tool helps them to get a better picture of what's happening and the degree to which the problems are impacting on your child's life.

You will be asked a number of questions about your child, family history and family functioning.

From this interview, CYMH will determine whether your child could benefit from their services or another type of service in your community.

If CYMH services are deemed appropriate, they will let you know what type of service they can provide and approximately when you and your child will be seen.

If CYMH determines that your child's difficulties fall outside the range of their services, they will refer you to another community service that is better able to help

your child. For example, if your child is dealing with trauma from divorce or domestic violence, they may refer you to an agency that offers programs for children in this specific area.

What Services Does CYMH Provide?

Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMH) provides treatment and support to children and youth ages 0 to 18 years affected by serious mental health issues. Families are included and supported in the overall treatment plan. These services are offered in the community rather than in hospital or residential treatment facilities. CYMH services include the following:

Child and Adolescent Response Team & Associated Programs

Child and Adolescent Response Team

Child and Adolescent Response Team (CART) provides a community-based response to school-aged children and youth living in Vancouver who are experiencing acute psychiatric/emotional crises. Priority is given to those children/youth presenting with self-harm behavior or suicidal risk. CART offers emergency assessment and consultation; clinical intervention and short-term support/support; and co-ordination and connection with community resources to prevent recurrence of the crises that frequently result in multiple visits to hospital emergency departments.

The CART program accepts referrals Monday to Friday, from 8:30 am until 5:30 pm (excluding statutory holidays). Referrals are made by calling the CART office at 604-874-2300 and asking for the intake worker. The child/family therapist will assess the urgent situation over the phone. Depending on



the child/youth's specific needs, the therapist will offer a combination of services available through CART such as:

- 1) Telephone consultation.
- 2) On-site assessment/consultation and urgent intervention to determine an appropriate plan of action (coordination of services such as Ministry of Children and Family Development Youth Services, school, and referral to other resources).
- 3) Short term counselling.
- 4) Psychiatric assessment, when appropriate.

Note: *If a mental health care provider is already involved, please contact that clinician directly.*

200-2425 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V5T 4L6
Phone: (604) 874-2300

Youth Suicide Clinician

Provides specialized services for youth and their families as well as professional development regarding suicide awareness, intervention, grief and loss. May provide some critical incident consultation or debriefing services to Vancouver Coastal Health programs or non-profit agencies at the discretion of the Coordinator and as resources and time permit.

200 - 2425 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V5T 4L6
Phone: 604-874-2300

Hospital Liaison

This clinician provides bridging to children and youth assessed in hospital Emergency Rooms and short-stay units who are not currently involved with a mental health professional and who require follow up in the community.

200 - 2425 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V5T 4L6
Phone: 604-874-2300



I am embarrassed that my child needs help. Is it my fault?

Mental health disorders are the result of a complex set of factors. When you bring your child to a CYMH clinician, the therapy process is not about determining who has done something wrong. It is not your fault. Parenting a child is the hardest job you will ever do in your life. CYMH will help you figure out what the underlying issues are for your child and how to address those issues.

Aboriginal Outreach Clinician

This clinician offers culturally appropriate outreach, engagement and intervention services to hard to engage Aboriginal youth and their families in a youth-friendly non-clinical setting. Consultation to service providers about Aboriginal youth is a key component of this role.

200 - 2425 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V5T 4L6
Phone: 604-874-2300

Assertive Community Outreach

This clinician provides services for difficult to engage youth who need a longer-term outreach approach.

200 - 2425 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V5T 4L6
Phone: 604-874-2300

Adolescent Outreach Service (AOS)

Mental health therapists work in partnerships with Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) Youth Services teams to provide assessment, counseling, therapeutic intervention and education for youth with no fixed address. Consultation to service providers is also available.

550 Cambie Street, Vancouver, BC. V6N 2N7
Phone: 604-660-0778

Youth Hub Site Counsellors

Mental health counsellors at Vancouver Youth Centres provide early identification and intervention services for youth with mental health issues. They are located primarily at satellite locations including:

- Broadway Youth Resource Centre (BYRC)
- Directions Youth Centre
- South Vancouver Youth Centre (SVYC)
- Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA)

Referrals come from Child and Youth Central Intake, Mental Health Teams and Programs, Ministry of Child and Family Development, and directly from the youth centres.

For more information regarding the referral process, contact the CART Coordinator at 604-874-2300.

Vancouver Mental Health Teams

The eight Mental Health Teams (MHT) that service Vancouver are coordinated into two larger Child and Youth Mental Health Teams:

East Team

- Strathcona MHT
- Northeast MHT
- Midtown MHT
- Grandview Woodlands MHT

West Team

- West Side MHT
- West End MHT
- Kitsilano Fairview MHT
- South MHT

Upon acceptance of your child or youth for treatment, the treatment team will determine the clinical services through an initial assessment performed by the therapist and/or team psychiatrist with your various involved family members. An individualized treatment plan is developed and may include a variety of services like cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), play therapy, individual therapy, family therapy, or group therapy. If medication is recommended, the team psychiatrist will explain why and

what medication is being recommended so you can be informed in making your choice on whether to have your child take medication.

The clinical staff also connects on an ongoing basis with other people who may be involved with your child or youth such as school teachers and counsellors, daycares, Ministry of Children and Family Development, family physicians, foster parents, BC Children's Hospital, The Maples, etc. You will hear the word Case Management, or Integrated Case Management if there are various people involved in supporting your child and youth family. Case management refers to managing situations where the nature of the problem is complex and multiple services and professionals are involved.

Cantonese-Mandarin Cross-Cultural Clinician

This clinician provides treatment specifically to Cantonese/Mandarin-speaking children, youth and their families experiencing mental health issues. As well, the role is designed to help build increase knowledge and support within and amongst the Chinese cultural community in Vancouver.

Phone: Vancouver Child and Youth Mental Health Services Referral Line at 604-709-4111 to access the Mental Health Teams or cross-cultural clinician.

Alan Cashmore Centre

The Alan Cashmore Centre is an early childhood mental health team that provides family-focused treatment services for children under five when there are significant concerns around a child's social, emotional, and/or behavioural development. A range of individual, parent/child relational and group interventions are provided. Education and consultation to community and parent groups are also offered upon request.

Goals of the service:

- Promote optimal social and emotional development in the early years.
- Promote healthy attachment in young children.
- Promote a satisfying relationship between parent and child.
- Enhance parental confidence and competence in their interaction with their child.

The multidisciplinary team includes child psychiatry, child and family therapy, speech therapy and child care counselors.

3rd Floor, 2805 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC V5R 5H9

Phone: 604-454-1676 with enquiries or referrals.

Family and Community Enhancement Services

Family And Community Enhancement Services (FACES) is an amalgamation of programs, services and initiatives dedicated to creating a healthy environment for children and youth through prevention, intervention and family and community capacity building. FACES programs and services include the following:

ADHD Parent Program

The ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) Parent Program is for parents/caregivers of children/youth (ages 3 to 15 years) who have a primary diagnosis of ADHD and live in the city of Vancouver. The ADHD Parent Program is a psycho-educational, therapeutic program consisting of eight weekly group sessions and four post-group in home sessions. Parents learn problem solving strategies and behaviour management techniques in order to improve their child's functioning and the family's management of the child.

1212 West Broadway, Suite 401, Vancouver BC V6H 3V1

Phone: 604-714-4830

Connect Parent Group

The Connect Parent Group is a nine-week program that introduces parents to attachment issues in a structured psycho-educational format. The goal of Connect is to help parents recognize signs of distress and anxiety in pre-adolescents, to respond with empathy and to use non-coercive ways of interacting with youth in their care. Group leaders use case examples to show parents the attachment issues that often can cause aggressive and provocative behaviour.

1212 West Broadway, Suite 401, Vancouver BC V6H 3V1
Phone: 604-714-4830



FACES' Occupational Therapist

The occupational therapist facilitates the Resilient Kids' Group, which is a 10-week psycho-educational group for children and youth who have a parent with a mental illness. The group aims to help children and youth understand their parent's mental illness, gain coping skills, and connect with peers experiencing similar issues.

1212 West Broadway, Suite 401, Vancouver BC V6H 3V1
Phone: 604-714-4830

Foundations

Foundations provides in-home consultation and education through the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services

Society (VACFSS) to caregivers of children who are experiencing severe emotional and behavioural problems.

1212 West Broadway, Suite 401, Vancouver BC V6H 3V1
Phone: 604-714-4830 for more information



School Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Clinician

This clinician provides education and training services to the Vancouver School Board in order to increase awareness of child and youth mental health issues. The clinician facilitates the development of illness prevention, early identification and intervention strategies.

1212 West Broadway, Suite 401,
Vancouver BC V6H 3V1
Phone: 604-714-4830



My child/youth has drug/alcohol problems. Where do I go to get help?

Vancouver has a dedicated phone line called “D-Talks” that provides youth with information on drug and alcohol treatment services.

Contact “D-Talks” at 1-866-658-1221

Addiction services include: Counselling Services, Needle Exchange Services, Opiate Replacement Therapy, Withdrawal Management Services & Youth Prevention Services.

For more information, please visit
www.vch.ca/community/addictions.htm

Concurrent Disorders Clinician

The clinician provides individual treatment to children and youth with concurrent mental health and addictions issues. The clinician also provides consultation and education services to CYMH clinicians and the broader community.

1212 West Broadway, Suite 401, Vancouver BC V6H 3V1
Phone: 604-714-4830

Boundaries

The Boundaries program is a family and community-based program that provides treatment for children under 12 who are engaged in problematic sexual behaviour. Boundaries clinicians also provide consultation, training, and community capacity-building.

1212 West Broadway, Suite 401, Vancouver BC V6H 3V1
Phone: 604-714-4830

Hamber House

Hamber House is an adolescent day treatment program for Vancouver residents (ages 13 to 18) who have psychiatric disorders and significant difficulty attending other school programs. This partnership program of Vancouver Board of Education, Ministry of Children and Family Development and Vancouver Coastal Health provides mental health interventions in combination with the high school curriculum. Day treatment is offered in a sheltered atmosphere and works in collaboration with other community resources. The program provides transitional planning and some limited follow-up.

Note: *Hamber House is not designed for adolescents who have behaviour or substance use issues. Referrals are received from community mental health professionals.*

233 West 15th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1Y1
Phone: 604-876-9276

Additional Programs and Services

The Infant Development Program

The Infant Development Program (IDP) serves children from birth to three years old who are at risk for or who already have a delay in development. Call 604-435-8166 for more information.

Early Psychosis Intervention Program

The Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) Program serves to improve outcomes for individuals ages 13 to 30 with definite or possible untreated psychosis by facilitating early identification and comprehensive treatment. Clinical Services include assessment, treatment, medication management and groups. Individuals and/or their families, physicians or community agencies can make referrals directly to the program. Treatment will include education and group work for clients and for families.

207-2250 Commercial Street, Vancouver, BC V5N 5N9
Phone: 604 225-2211 Web: www.hopevancouver.com

Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Well Being Program

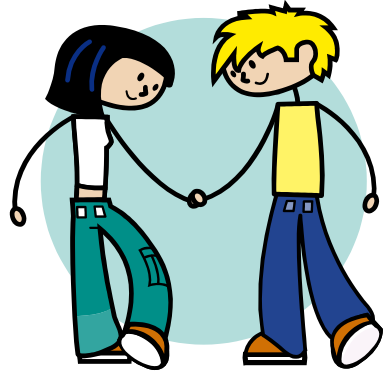
The Well Being Program arranges therapy for deaf or hard of hearing individuals including those who have a history of abuse. The provincial program has 40 therapists on contracts, some of whom sign fluently and others who are assisted by qualified interpreters. Mental health support services are also provided to enhance the well being of deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind individuals and their families. Also provided are consultation and mental health interpreters for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind who are clients of Vancouver Community Mental Health Services (VCMHS) or other programs throughout the province, community education on mental health issues and workshops and educational opportunities for professionals working with this client group.

300-4211 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 1Z6
Phone: 604-456-0900 TTY: 604-732-7549

Community Link Program

The Community Link Program (CLP) provides individualized psychosocial rehabilitation services to individuals ages 16 and up, who have a serious mental illness and are having difficulty accessing, engaging and sustaining involvement in community programs and activities.

2610 Victoria Drive,
Vancouver, BC V5N 4L2
Phone: 604-435-5677



Centre for Concurrent Disorders

Centre for Concurrent Disorders (CCD) provides assessment, counselling, therapeutic intervention, and group work for youth with concurrent mental health and addiction concerns as well as consultation and education to service providers.

Phone: 604-255-9843 Web: www.vch.ca/programs/ddp.htm

Youth Employment Program

The Youth Employment Program (YEP) at Gastown Vocational Services assists youth with a mental health disorder to obtain work experience, employment and access educational/skill training programs to reach their volunteer, employment, and educational goals. Services include psychological assessment, work-readiness skill training, career planning, employment counselling, supported education, and job placement. Supported education services include identifying realistic educational programs necessary for employment, and finding on-the-job training opportunities. All programs include active case management with individualized planning and support. Evening support groups are provided.

405-375 Water Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5C6
Phone: 604-683-6047 or 604-993-2542
Web: www.gvsonline.ca

Youth Supported Independent Living Program

Youth Supported Independent Living (YSIL) Program is administered by the Motivation, Power and Achievement (MPA) Society in conjunction with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (Vancouver) and Vancouver Community Mental Health Services. The purpose of the program is to enable seriously mentally ill youth to live in an independent living situation in the community and provide good transition between youth and adult mental health services.

233 West 15th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1Y1
Phone: 604-876-9276

Adult Mental Health Services

Sometimes services need to continue into adulthood that requires transition planning to adult mental health services. These services are similar to those provided for children and youth but are operated through the regional health authorities.

For more information please call 604-874-7626 or visit www.vch.ca/community/mental_health.htm.



If you want more information on the programs and services listed in this document, please visit the following sources:

- **School Health Manual**
www.vch.ca/infantchildyouth
(CYMH Services are listed in Section 13)
- **HealthLink BC** (dial 8-1-1)
find.healthlinkbc.ca

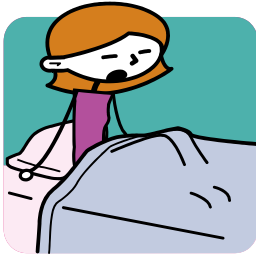
Provincial Services

Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre

The Maples is a provincial mental health facility providing assessment and treatment for adolescents in BC that provides residential and/or outreach services for youth aged 12 to 17 with significant psychiatric and behavioural difficulties. Referrals are routed through a community mental health gatekeeper. For more information, please visit www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/maples/index.htm or contact your local child and youth mental health office.

3455 Kaslo Street, Vancouver, BC V5M 3H4

Phone for Vancouver Gatekeeping: 604-734-7622



BC Children's Hospital Child and Youth Mental Health Programs

Children's Hospital provides mental health assessment and treatment for British Columbia and Yukon children, youth and their families. Both inpatient and outpatient clinical services are available.

For some children with severe mental health problems, a hospital stay may be necessary. Children are admitted to the hospital through a referral from a doctor or mental health team. Generally there is a wait list of several months. The average length of stay is three to four weeks but this will depend on the needs of your child. More information about BC Children's Hospital can be found at www.bcchildrens.ca/Services/default.htm.

The program compliments community-based mental health centers by providing specialized consultation, outreach and education services.

Sunny Hill Health Center provides specialized services to children with disabilities from birth to age 19.

These are the programs and services offered at Children's and the Sunny Hill Centre for Children:

- **Adolescent Psychiatry Inpatient Unit (P2):** Inpatient assessment and treatment for youth (12 and over) with serious psychiatric symptoms.
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Program:** Outpatient assessment and consultation for children, youth and adults with all forms of ADHD.
- **Autism Spectrum Disorders (Sunny Hill Health Centre):** Assessment, diagnosis, education and research for children and youth with autism.
- **Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Emergency Unit (CAPE):** Inpatient crisis intervention unit for children and youth to age 16.
- **Child Psychiatry Inpatient Unit (P1):** Inpatient assessment and treatment for children under 12 with complex psychiatric problems.
- **Child Psychiatry Teaching & Consultation Clinic:** Affiliated with the University of BC Faculty of Medicine, providing outpatient psychiatric assessments for children aged 6 to 17.



- **Eating Disorders Program:** A range of outpatient, day treatment and inpatient programs for children and youth with all types of eating disorders.
- **Kelty Resource Center:** A provincial resource centre located at BC Children's Hospital, working to link children, youth and their families with appropriate resources in

all areas of mental health and addictions. The centre also serves the resource needs of adults with an eating disorder. Call 604-875-2084 or e-mail keltycentre@bcmhs.bc.ca.

- **Infant Psychiatry Clinic:** Outpatient assessment and short-term treatment for young children, ages 5 and under.
- **Mood and Anxiety Disorders Clinic:** Outpatient consultation for children and youth (ages 6 to 19) with a mood and/or anxiety disorder.
- **Neuropsychiatry Clinic:** Diagnostic assessments for children and youth (to age 19) with neurodevelopmental conditions in combination with behavioral problems.
- **Urgent Assessment Clinic:** Prompt assessments for children and youth (up to age 16) with acute psychiatric symptoms.
- **Provincial Youth Concurrent Disorders Program:** Outpatient consultation and on-going treatment is provided for youth (ages 12 to 24) with substance use disorders, and conditions involving both substance abuse and mental disorders.

Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services

Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services (YFPS) is for youth who have become involved with the law. YFPS provides court-ordered and court-related assessment and treatment services for youth. Referrals must be made through Youth Justice Courts, Youth Probation Officers and Youth Custody Centres.

For more information on YFPS, please visit www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/yfps/pdf/yfps_brochure.pdf.

Oh No!! The Dreaded Wait List

You're been told that your child could benefit from having services but there's a long wait list.



What do you do in the meantime?

There are some very good documentaries, books, and tip sheets that have been produced over the years for families of children and youth with mental health issues.

Some links to this information are:



www.heretohelp.bc.ca
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health
www.bckidsmentalhealth.org

There are some good resources on the internet. We have included some of these at the end of this resource.

If you have concerns you can call CYMH and they will try to help in any way they can.

Ask about any parenting programs specifically designed for parents who have a child with mental health concerns or if they can send you any information that would help better understand and support your child.



If you have extended health benefits e.g., through work, you may want to look into accessing a psychologist or counselor as their services may be covered under your plan. The website for registered psychologists is www.psychologists.bc.ca and for registered counselors is www.bc-counsellors.org.

Some community agencies offer counseling services free or on a sliding scale, depending on your ability to pay.

A parent support group or parent education sessions might help you to better support your child (contact The FORCE Society for more information 604-878-3400, or www.bckidsmentalhealth.org).

You may also want to ask your school about psycho-educational testing to rule out any learning disability. Often the waitlist to have this testing done through the school can be quite lengthy but there are private agencies that provide psycho-educational testing (Note: there is a fee for this testing). Check the Learning Disabilities website at www.ldav.ca/referrals.html for more information.

What Kinds of Services Are Available For Children or Youth Who Refuse To See Someone?

It can be very frustrating for a parent when their child refuses to get help for their mental health problems. Sometimes it requires a great deal of patience and time in order to help a young person to realize that they need help. Ongoing efforts to convince the youth to seek help are often needed.

If you believe that your child is in danger of harming themselves or others, you should contact:

- **Child and Adolescent Response Team (CART)**
 - Accepts referrals Monday to Friday, 8:30 am–5:30 pm
 - Referrals are made by calling the CART office (604-874-2300) and asking for the intake worker.
- **Vancouver Mental Health Emergency Services (MHES)**
 - 24-hour crisis and support line for residents of the city of Vancouver.
 - Call 604-874-7307 and speak with a registered nurse who is experienced in mental health care, services and crisis intervention.

- The Cars 87/88 program partners a police officer and a nurse to respond to urgent mental health calls.
- **Call 911** or take your child to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Involuntary Treatment

Please see the Mental Health Act (page 33) for a comparison between voluntary and involuntary admission. For involuntary treatment, there must be evidence that the young person:

- 1) is suffering from a mental disorder that seriously impairs the person's ability to react appropriately to his or her environment or to associate with others;
- 2) requires psychiatric treatment in or through a designated facility;
- 3) requires care, supervision and control in or through a designated facility to prevent the person's substantial mental or physical deterioration or for the person's protection or the protection of others;

and

- 4) is not suitable as a voluntary patient.

What To Do If There Is A Crisis?

Families with a child or youth experiencing a mental health emergency are advised to call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room.

Within Vancouver city, children under 17 years of age should attend the emergency room at BC Children's Hospital, and those aged 17 and above should attend the emergency room at Vancouver General Hospital.



BC Children's Hospital

Box 141- 4500 Oak Street
Vancouver, BC V6H 3N1

Child & Adolescent Response Team (CART) accepts referrals Monday to Friday, from 8:30 am until 5:30 pm, for children and youth experiencing acute psychiatric/emotional crises. Referrals are made by calling the CART office at 604-874-2300 and asking for the intake worker.

BC Children's Hospital Urgent Assessment Clinic

The Urgent Assessment Clinic provides prompt psychiatric assessment and short-term treatment recommendations for children and youth (up to age 16) who require urgent outpatient assessment, where local resources are unavailable or inadequate. Patients must be referred by a physician or mental health agency. Call 604-875-2010.

Crisis Line

604-872-3311

Suicide Hotline

1-800-784-2433

Mental Health Emergency Services (MHES)

604-874-7307

So How Will CYMH Help My Family?

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The first step will be to have your child assessed in order to better understand the nature of their problem. This assessment can include different kinds of psychological tests, interviews with you and your child, and possibly other information—from your family doctor, paediatrician or school counselor or teacher. You decide whether you agree to having any outside information shared with CYMH. The assessment will look at both your child’s strengths and areas where he or she is having difficulty.

CYMH incorporates a care team approach. This means that there may be a number of professionals who work together to develop a plan for helping your child. This also means that you, as a parent, will also be an important part of this team. Your involvement is important as it will help you to better understand the nature of your child’s difficulties and how you can support your child at home. Make sure to ask how you will be involved and what your expected role is as a parent.

Diagnosing mental health issues in children can be difficult as symptoms and signs can be common to more than one disorder. Sometimes it takes time to fully understand the nature of the child’s problem and observations. This may result in a change in diagnosis as additional symptoms become evident.



Who are the Professionals in CYMH?

Intake Workers: These clinicians answer calls that come in and collect information using the Brief Child and Family Phone Interview (BCFPI)—a 30–45 minute telephone interview.

Clinicians/Therapists: These clinicians provide assessments and therapy for individuals, families and groups. They typically have a Masters Degree in Counselling Psychology or Social Work and may have additional training in certain types of therapy.

Psychiatrists: These are medical doctors who have specialized training in childhood mental health disorders. Psychiatrists do assessments and diagnose mental health disorders as well as prescribe medications. They work in conjunction with the rest of the treatment team.

Occupational Therapists: These therapists assist with life skills, community integration, leisure, work, education and personal goals.

Okay We've Been Asked to Come In ... Now What Happens?

When you begin services, the clinician will sit down with you and explain what will happen. There usually isn't the need to sign consent forms unless the clinician feels it is important to get information on another service involved with the child or to share information with other professionals involved.

You do not have to agree to CYMH talking with others, although it is important to be aware that it can be very beneficial to your child. You can also specify what information can be shared or not shared and you can change your mind at any point (but be sure to let CYMH know that you no longer consent).

Based on the assessment and information gathered about your child and the problems they are experiencing, the clinician will draw up a recommended plan to help your child. It is important that this plan is fully explained to you so that you can make an informed decision about how to proceed.

Challenges of Diagnosing Mental Disorders in Children

A number of mental health problems have some common symptoms. This can make it difficult to determine the precise diagnosis.

For example, bipolar disorder, depression and anxiety disorder can be characterized by irritability as well as sleep and concentration difficulties.

Bipolar disorder and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can include distractibility, physical hyperactivity, and talkativeness.



To complicate matters even more, it is not uncommon for children to be dealing with more than one disorder. For example, it is quite common for children who have depression, to also have an anxiety disorder.

In order to help, it is important to let the clinician know as much as you can about what you—as well as others who know your child—have noticed in your child’s mood and behavior.

Treatment Plans

A treatment plan is an individualized approach that is created for your child. It is based on an evaluation of your child’s problems and strengths. The treatment plan offers recommendations for the best type of therapy for your child.



The treatment plan is a written document based on the assessment and will outline the course of action that the clinician believes will help your child. CMYH Services use evidence-based treatments—ones that have been shown to work. Treatment may involve the use of medications, a combination of medication and therapy or just therapy. Your child may be involved in individual or group sessions. Medication would be prescribed through your family doctor or a psychiatrist. For example, they may recommend that your child comes in for counselling once a week for three months or that they attend group therapy for a certain period of time. The length of time for treatment depends on the difficulties your child is experiencing.

The treatment plan includes needs and goals. These needs and goals are then used to evaluate how well your child is doing and whether any modifications to the treatment plan are needed.

The following are examples of possible goals:

- Improved relationships with parents, siblings, teachers and friends
- Better schoolwork
- Improved self-esteem
- Fewer disruptive behaviors

The goals should be:

- Realistic
- Something your child will be able to do
- Behaviors that you can observe and measure (e.g., with rating scales)

The clinician will review the proposed treatment with you and your child. You do not have to agree to the treatment plan. For example, many parents worry about giving their child medication. For some children, it may be very beneficial but there is choice. You can still continue to receive services even if you disagree with the treatment plan.

During the course of treatment, the clinician will re-evaluate your child's progress, if they feel that your child needs less help, they will discuss this with you and your child; similarly if your child seems to need a bit more help, therapy may be extended.

If your child is encountering difficulties in school as a result of their mental health problems, it can be very beneficial to include the school as part of the treatment team. This enables the school to better understand what they need to do in order help your child do well in school.



What Types of Therapy Are Provided?

The type of therapy offered will depend on the nature of your child's problems and their age. Below are some of the more common types of therapy that are offered through CYMH:

Individual therapy: one-on-one counseling. The most commonly used type is called cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT aims to help people identify unhelpful assumptions or "automatic thoughts," and to make connections between these thoughts and the way they act and feel. Cognitive-behavioural therapy is used to treat a variety of problems, including depression, anxiety and panic disorders, and eating disorders.

Play therapy: for young children, play therapy uses painting, puppets, and other activities as a way to engage a child to communicate with their therapist about their problems and strengths they have to overcome the challenge. Play allows the child to express emotions and problems that might be too difficult for the child to talk about with another person. Young children, often have a less difficult time expressing themselves through play. Children can learn to master frightening feelings through play and practice the social skills.



Family therapy: helps with issues that affect the whole family. Family therapy can be beneficial in maintaining good relationships within the family while dealing with the pressures of mental health problems. Sessions may involve some or all members of the family. Benefits include opportunities for the family to express their concerns and fears and the family dynamics. Families can also learn new ways of getting along as a family.

Group therapy: Therapeutic counselling in a group format. Children or youth who are dealing with similar problems are brought together in a therapeutic group. These groups are usually run for a specified period of time (e.g., 8 weeks).

Other types of therapy that may be offered include:

Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT): is a comprehensive cognitive behavioural treatment with a strong emphasis on the building of personal skills and of empowerment. It usually entails increasing skills in the four areas of mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, management of distress, and better regulation of emotions. In DBT, there are four behavioural targets:

- 1) decrease life-threatening behaviours
- 2) decrease therapy-disrupting behaviours that may compromise treatment effectiveness
- 3) decrease behaviours that interfere with quality of life
- 4) increase coping skills.

Brief or solution-focused therapy: focuses on empowering individuals to find solutions in their life by figuring out what a person's goals are, and supporting them to find ways to achieve those goals.

Interpersonal therapy (IPT): focuses on relationship-based issues. Clients are helped to look at any difficulties they have in maintaining relationships and in resolving relationship difficulties.

Motivational interviewing: attempts to increase clients' awareness of the potential problems caused, consequences experienced, and risks faced as a result of the behavior in question. Therapists help clients envisage a better future. The aim is to work towards enhancing the individual's motivation to change by identifying and resolving ambivalence.



Questions to Ask Your Child's Therapist

These questions are best asked over time and not all will apply for each family.

- What kind of help will my child get from you? What can you offer?
- What sorts of experience/education do you have?
- What are the most effective approaches to helping a child like mine?
- Does my child have to take medication for their illness? Will they have to stay on medication for a long time?
- How long will my child receive services from you?
- If all the usual treatments/approaches to dealing with my child's problem aren't helping enough, then what?
- Who do I call if there is a crisis?
- What can I do to support my child at home?
- How will I be involved in this process? Where do I fit in?
- What are the limits of confidentiality? What if my child refuses to give consent to have information shared with me as their parent?
- What information is recorded about my child and who has access to this information?
- Should my child's school be involved in this process?
- What other services are available to help and support my child?



Questions to Ask Your Child's Therapist (cont'd)

- What assistance can I receive as a parent? What about other members of my family?
- How will a diagnosis affect my child's future chances/position in school and society?
- What happens if my child turns 19 and still needs help?

How Long Will My Child Require Services?

Mental health treatment is a process. Change often takes some time.

It can be difficult to predict how long is needed in order to help a young person who is facing mental health challenges. Some may require only a few visits while others may need help over a longer period of time.

The frequency and duration of therapy vary and will depend on the type and severity of mental health problem your child is experiencing. Other important factors that will impact your child's progress include regular attendance for therapy, parent participation, and implementation of therapy activities at home.

Together you, your child and your child's clinician will develop some short term goals to use a basis for helping your child. At the end of that period, together you can evaluate how well your child is doing and whether they would benefit from additional help.



Child Disability Benefit (CDB)

The Child Disability Benefit (CDB) is a tax-free benefit for families who care for a child under age 18 with a severe and prolonged impairment in mental or physical functions.

To be eligible a child must have a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions. An impairment is prolonged if it has lasted, or is expected to last, for a continuous period of at least 12 months. A qualified practitioner must certify on Form T2201, Disability Tax Credit Certificate, that the child's impairment meets certain conditions.

For more information, please visit www.cra-arc.gc.ca/benefits/cctb or contact your local tax services office.



Who decides that my child no longer needs services?

The decision to terminate therapy sessions is based upon the improvement in your child's functioning. Treatment plans typically include goals which can be assessed after a period of time (e.g., 3 months) to see whether your child is making progress. At that time, you, your child and their therapist can evaluate how well your child is doing. When it becomes apparent that your child is doing much better, the therapist will begin to prepare your child that they will no longer need to come for therapy.

Will we be able to access services in the future if my child needs them?

Should your child experience difficulties after they have finished receiving services, you can always call CYMH to discuss whether it would be helpful to get further services.

What Can I Do If I Am Experiencing A Problem with CYMH?

CYMH strives to provide the highest quality of services. However, in spite of everyone's hard efforts, problems may still arise. It's important that you feel confident in the knowledge, skill, and interest of those helping your child. You should be able to communicate freely with these individuals and not feel intimidated by them.

If you find that you do have problems with the people who are on your child's treatment team, talk with them openly and honestly, and tell them how you are feeling. If you are uncomfortable talking to your child's team, you may want to consider bringing someone with you to support you.

Alternatively, you can ask to speak with someone at the office such as the coordinator/supervisor, who will try to help you resolve problematic situations. If the problem isn't resolved, there is a Representative for Children and Youth who can be contacted at 1-800-476-3922 or emailed at rcy@rcybc.ca.



For more information about the Representative for Children and Youth and their complaint process, visit their website at www.rcybc.ca.

Medication

Medication is not necessarily the first line of treatment for a number of mental health problems.

However, for certain kinds of mental health problems (e.g., ADHD or psychosis), medication may be an important part of the treatment plan. It is important that you learn about the benefits and risks of the medication recommended for your child. Most, if not all medications



No-charge Medications (Plan G)

This no-charge psychiatric medication program assists people for whom the cost of psychiatric medication is a serious barrier but who, without medication, would suffer very serious consequences, such as hospitalization.

The program provides psychiatric medication approved by Pharmacare at no cost to the individual (please note, there are exceptions).

To qualify, consider these questions:

- 1) Am I financially eligible? If your net family adjusted income is less than \$24,000 a year plus \$3,000 for each dependent
and
- 2) If a physician says your child meets clinical criteria.

To apply, have your child/youth's doctor or psychiatrist fill out the form at www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/exforms and send it to the address on the form. Your local child and youth mental health office may also have these forms available and assist in filling it out.



have side effects. In most cases these side effects can be effectively managed. Ask for information about any medications your child will be taking.

In some cases, medication may be needed to help a child to the point where they can benefit from therapy.

For example, many children with severe anxiety may not be able benefit from therapy until their anxiety is reduced. Others will simply refuse to talk with a therapist at all. For these children, it would be reasonable to initiate treatment with a medication before a course of therapy is attempted.

Commonly Asked Questions

Can My Child Be Seen Without My Knowledge and Consent?

BC's Infants Act says that children under 19 have the right to consent to their own health care which includes mental health. They do not need the consent of a parent or guardian. But the child must be mature enough to understand the risks and consequences of the treatment to give their own consent. The law considers them capable if they understand the need for a medical treatment, what the treatment involves, the benefits and risks of getting the treatment, and of not getting the treatment. If the doctor or health care provider explains these things and decides that the child understands them, they can treat the child without permission from the parents or guardians. The child might have to sign a consent form.

Child and Youth Mental Health Services has an obligation to inform parents if their child is suicidal.



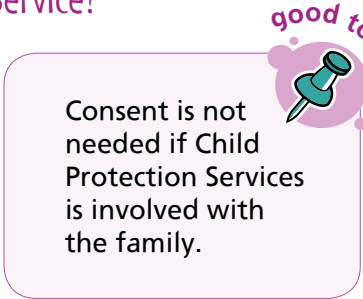
Who Will Have Access to My Child's Information?

CYMH will ensure that information about your child will be kept confidential and that before any information is shared, you (or your child) will be asked to sign a consent form indicating that you give permission to have information shared. It is sometimes important for your child's therapist to be able to talk with other professionals about your child in order to ensure there is continuity of care. Other professionals may include your child's doctor or teacher, or other service providers such as a social worker. You and your child have a right to know what

information will be shared and why it is important to their care. If you have any concerns, please talk with your child's therapist before you sign a consent form.

My Spouse and I are Separated/Divorced. Do we Both Have to Consent to Service?

If you and your spouse have joint custody, both of you will be asked to consent. If there is no legal custodial agreement, the parent with whom the child resides can give consent.



Consent is not needed if Child Protection Services is involved with the family.

How Can I Find Out How My Child Is Doing?

Confidentiality also applies to what information is shared with you as a parent. Children also have a right to decide what information will be shared with their parents. Your child's therapist will discuss with your child, what information can be shared with you—the parent.

A therapist will provide you with general information about your child's progress and if there are any safety issues you should be aware of. For the most part, therapists generally will not disclose details of what is talked about in therapy. This is to protect the relationship between therapist and child so that the child feel safe to speak about any issues without fear of anyone else knowing.

Older children can refuse to consent to having any information shared with their parents (including that they are receiving services). In these cases, it can be very upsetting for the parent, who is naturally concerned about their child. Your child's therapist will attempt to work with your child to help them understand the benefits of communicating with you as parents.

My Child/Youth has Drug/Alcohol Problems —Where Do I Go to Get Help?

Below is a list of services that offer assistance to families where a youth is struggling with alcohol/drug problems.

Raven Song Community Health Centre

Primary Care, Prevention Services for Youth, Needle Exchange, Counselling, Home Detox & Methadone Maintenance Program.
604-709-6400

Evergreen Community Health Centre

Primary Care, Prevention Services for Youth, Home Detox, Methadone Program, Needle Exchange (Mon–Fri, 8:30am to 4:30pm) and Counselling.
604-707-3620

Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society (DEYAS)

Residential Detox Services for youth 12–21 (Assessment, 24-hour supervision, after care and support) 6 beds; 3–7 days.
604-685-6561

Centre for Concurrent Disorders

Assessment and treatment of both mental health and substance use problems; counselling; group treatment and outreach.
604-255-9843

Family Services of Greater Vancouver

Residential Detox Services for youth 12–21 (Assessment, 24-hour supervision, after care and support) 2 beds; 3–7 days.
604-872-4349
www.fsgv.ca

PLEA Community Services Society of British Columbia

Residential Detox Services for youth 12–21 (Assessment, 24-hour supervision, after care and support) 6 beds; 3–7 days.
604-871-0450
Pager Intake: 604-891-1082
www.plea.bc.ca

Pacific Spirit Community Health Centre

Primary Care, Prevention Services for Youth, Home Detox & Methadone Maintenance, Needle Exchange and Counselling.
604-267-3970



Who Can I Go To for Legal Advice?

Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS)

Litigates test cases and seeks reform laws in all areas of law relating to economically, socially, physically, and mentally disadvantaged.

1-888-685-6222

www2.povnet.org/clas

Mental Health Law Program (part of CLAS)

Provides free legal representation of patients at review panels under the Mental Health Act and Review Boards under the Criminal Code.

1-888-685-6222

Legal Aid

This Legal Services Society will pay for a lawyer to represent you in court, if you have a legal problem covered by their legal aid guidelines; your income and the value of your property is below a certain limit; you have no other way of getting legal help; and you can pay a contribution to the Legal Services Society.

1-866-577-2525

www.lss.bc.ca

Legal Services Society's Law Line

Provides general information, education, and referral services (Note: not specific to mental health law issues; line is staffed by librarians, not lawyers).

1-866-577-2525

www.lss.bc.ca

Law Students Legal Advice Program

UBC student-operated program supervised by lawyers, giving free legal advice to low-income people.

604-822-5791

Lawyer Referral Service

If referred through this service, you only have to pay \$10 for the first half-hour of consultation, with regular rates thereafter.

1-800-633-1919

Dial-a-Law

Library of pre-recorded messages prepared by lawyers to provide practical information on aspects of law.

1-800-565-5297

www.dialalaw.org

Information provided by the CMHA Kelowna Branch Consumer Development Project; funding provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development Interior Region

Relevant Legislation

BC Infants Act

The BC Infants Act says that children (anyone under 19 years old) can consent (or agree) to their own medical care if the practitioner:

- (a) has explained to the young person and has been satisfied that the young person understands the nature and consequences and the reasonably foreseeable benefits and risks of the health care

And

- (b) has made reasonable efforts to determine and has concluded that health care or treatment is in the child/youth's best interests.

The exceptions to confidentiality are situations where the child may harm themselves or others; or when the child discloses abuse or neglect of themselves or their siblings.

A doctor or health care provider can't talk with the parents or guardian about a capable child's mental health care, unless the child agrees. Just as health care providers must keep information about their adult patients confidential, they must also keep information about their child patients confidential.

Canadian Bar Association, October 2007



For the full Infants Act, visit the website at www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/i/96223_01.htm

BC Mental Health Act

The mental health act deals with both voluntary and involuntary treatment.

	Voluntary	Involuntary
What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person admits themselves into a facility by their own free will Voluntary admission is described in the Act under section 20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person is admitted, not by their free will, into a facility by a doctor, police officer, or court. Involuntary admission is described in the Act under section 22 Rights of the individual are outlined in section 34-34.2
Admission Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a person has been examined by a doctor and has a mental disorder, the director may admit them if asked by the person, or a parent/guardian on their behalf if they are under 16 years When a person is under 16 years is admitted, they must be examined by a doctor once a month for the first 2 months, then within 3 months after the second exam, then within 6 months of the third exam and every 6 months thereafter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The director may admit a person for up to 48 hours with 1 Medical Certificate (valid for 14 days following date of examination) Once admitted, the second doctor's examination, and certificate must be issued within 48 hours. A police officer may take a person into custody for a doctor's examination if s/he believes the person may put at risk her/his/ someone else's safety Anyone may ask a judge to issue a warrant if they feel a person meets the committal criteria. The facility must send notice of detention to a near relative informing of the patient's admission and treatment.



For children under 16, the parent admits the child into the hospital.

	Voluntary	Involuntary
Discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most discharges are by the doctor's orders • A patient under 16 years must be discharged if the parent/guardian requests it • If a patient under 16 requests discharge without consent from parents, the request will go to a Review Panel hearing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A request for discharge will go through Review Panel hearing • Obtain application Form 7 for a Review Panel hearing only after second Medical Certificate is completed • A person is entitled to representation at the hearing by a lawyer, advocate or person of choice
Consent to Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients must consent before treatment is administered. • The physician must inform the patient of the nature of their condition and the reasons for and consequences of the treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Act provides for compulsory treatment of all involuntary patients but patients will still be offered a chance to consent to treatment • The patient or someone on their behalf may ask for a second opinion on diagnosis.
Application to court for discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See section, Discharge above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the patient or their representative do not agree with the order of admission into a facility, then an application may be made to the court to reverse the involuntary committal certificate.
Access to medical certificates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All patients are allowed access to their Medical Certificates.

Information table provided by the CMHA Kelowna Branch Consumer Development Project; funding provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development Interior Region

Resources

Some helpful websites

- www.bckidsmentalhealth.org
- www.anxietybc.com
- www.heretohelp.bc.ca
- www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/publications.htm
- www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/programs_resources.htm

Bipolar

- www.bipolarchild.com
- www.bpkids.org
- www.depressedteens.com

Anxiety

- www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/anxious.htm
- www.adaa.org/GettingHelp/FocusOn/Children&Adolescents.asp
- www.caringforkids.cps.ca/behaviour/fears.htm
- www.anxietybc.com

Eating Disorders

- www.jessieshope.org
- www.anred.com
- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/eatingdisorders.html

Depression

- www.aacap.org/publications/factsFam/depressed.htm
- www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/teen.htm

ADHD

- www.aacap.org
- www.adhdinfo.com
- www.adhd.com.au
- www.caddra.ca
- www.chadd.org

Psychosis

- www.psychosissucks.ca
- www.hopevancouver.com

General Resources for Families

- Dr. Ross Greene's books on how to manage mental illness and support your child:
 - *The Explosive Child: Understanding and Helping Easily Frustrated, "Chronically Inflexible" Children*
 - *Treating Explosive Kids: The Collaborative Problem Solving Approach*

Available from www.explosivechild.com/books

- BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions' *Family Toolkit* includes module on children and youth in the school system. Available at www.heretohelp.bc.ca
- The FORCE Society's series of tip sheets on what to expect from professionals working with your child include:

What to Expect From:

- *Your Family Doctor*
- *Child and Youth Mental Health Services*
- *Your Child's School*

Available from www.bckidsmentalhealth.org

Resources for Children Dealing with Anxiety

- Taming the Worry Dragon series includes books, manuals and videotapes for children and teens. To order, call 604-875-3549
- Anxiety Disorders in Children and Youth issue of *Visions: BC's Mental Health and Addictions Journal* Available at www.heretohelp.bc.ca
- Anxiety Disorders Association of America self-tests:
 - For teens experiencing anxiety problems www.adaa.org/Public/selftest_ADA.htm
 - For parents of a child experiencing anxiety problems www.adaa.org/Public/selftest_children.htm

Important Information Lines

Kid's Help Phone
1-800-668-6868

**Abuse and Neglect
of Children**
310-1234 (toll-free)
[www.safekidsbc.ca/
helpline.htm](http://www.safekidsbc.ca/helpline.htm)

**Crisis Intervention & Suicide
Prevention Centre of BC**
1-800-661-3311
www.youthinBC.com

Kelty Resource Centre
604-875-2084 or
1-800-665-1822
[www.bcmhas.ca/
keltyresourcecentre](http://www.bcmhas.ca/keltyresourcecentre)

BC Poison Control
1-800-567-8911
www.bccdc.org

BC Nurse Line
1-866-215-4700

**Victim LINK
Information Service**
1-800-563+0808
www.vcn.bc.ca

Dietician
1-800-667-3438

**Representative for
Children & Youth**
1-800-476-3933

**Alcohol & Drug Information
& Referral Service**
1-800-663-1441
www.vcn.bc.ca

**Problem Gambling
Information &
Referral Service**
1-888-765-6111
www.vcn.bc.ca

Enquiry BC
(To contact your local MLA)
1-800-663-7867
www.leg.bc.ca

BC Pharmacare Program
1-800-387-4977
[www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/
pharme](http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/pharme)

**FORCE Society for
Kid's Mental Health**
310-6789 or 604-878-3400
www.bckidsmentalhealth.org

**BC Coalition of People
with Disabilities**
1-800-663-1278
www.bccpd.bc.ca

BC Review Board
1-877-305-2277
www.bcrb.bc.ca

**ARA Mental Health
Action Research &
Advocacy Association**
1-866-689-7938
www.aramentalhealth.org

Feedback Form

Orientation to Child & Youth Mental Health Services
A Guide for Families

1) Was there anything missing from the orientation that you would like to see included?

2) Was any of the information hard to understand or didn't make sense? If so, please indicate what information

3) Any other comments?

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback.

Please send this form to The FORCE Society, PO Box #91697,
West Vancouver, BC, V7V 3P3 or email your feedback to
theforce@bckidsmentalhealth.org.

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