

When you have concerns about your child's or young person's mental health you are not alone. Mental health concerns affect at least one in five children and youth. The recommended first steps to get help for your child are to talk with your family doctor or the physician at your walk-in clinic, and/or contact your local Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) services office.

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM

# Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Services

Your local CYMH office offers a range of free and voluntary mental health services and supports for children from 0-18 years of age and their families. These services include assessments, therapy and treatment, education and referrals to specialized programs and resources. CYMH is part of the provincial government's Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

For assistance locating CYMH information, the nearest CYMH team and locations in your area of BC, call 811 or visit [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health).

For walk-in clinic locations across BC, visit

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/mental-health-intake-clinics>.

## YOU CAN EXPECT THAT:

### INITIAL INTAKE AND APPOINTMENTS

- CYMH offices offer 90 walk-in intake clinics (no referral required) where children and youth can receive a same day initial assessment by a trained professional in a confidential environment. See link above.
- You will initially speak with a clinician who will discuss your concerns for your child and provide you with information on the process and next steps.
- An appointment will be scheduled for your child and/or you may be referred to community programs or specialists that could better address your child's needs.

You could also be advised to go to the hospital if it is determined that there is a serious safety or medical concern for your child.

- Your child's next appointment with CYMH will be scheduled according to the initial assessment of needs and risks. Children and youth with a greater degree of need will have highest priority.

### ASSESSMENT

- Usually your child will be provided with an initial assessment interview during their first appointment.
- There can be a wait for more intensive services, such as comprehensive mental health assessments and individual psychotherapy – waits vary throughout the province - but you will receive an initial service plan at the point of intake that outlines support and service options during a wait period.

If your child expresses suicidal thoughts or is at risk of harming themselves or others **call 911** or immediately go to your nearest emergency department.

For 24/7 Mental Health support for you or your family

**call 310-6789**

(no area code required)  
from anywhere in BC.

### TREATMENT PLANS

- Treatment options will be discussed with you and your child and could include individual, family or group therapy. If your child is seen by a psychiatrist then there may also be medication prescribed as part of treatment. Medication is always prescribed through a doctor or a psychiatrist.
- For a young person who may be experiencing significant mental health challenges, treatment options could also include programs that offer therapy, school and life skills training in a hospital

in-patient unit or day treatment program where more extensive assessment and observation can take place.

- Your role as a parent or caregiver is valuable and you will be involved in the therapeutic process. Children and youth who are struggling with their mental health achieve better results when their family and/or other caring adults are involved and supportive.

## INFORMATION SHARING

- The CYMH clinician may consult with other professionals involved in your child's care. You may be asked to give consent for records and information to be shared for the benefit of your child.
- You can receive information on the assessment and a recommended individualized treatment plan.

## WORKING WELL TOGETHER

- Work in partnership and presume you are both working towards what is best for your child.
- Practice respect, non-judgment and kindness when communicating, and recognize the "expertise" you each offer.
- Attend CYMH appointments with your child if possible. You may be asked to take part in appointments together with your child or you may be asked to meet with the clinician separately.
- Understand that a young person may access services at CYMH without parental consent and there are confidentiality/privacy laws that may not allow clinicians to share all information with you in some cases.
- Ask questions and do not hesitate to request clarification of any information you do not fully understand.
- While at home keep notes on your child's progress and challenges for sharing with your child's clinician.
- If circumstances change or challenges increase for your child while waiting for services inform your CYMH office. Your child may need to be seen sooner.
- Ask for information on resources, supports, education, skills and learning that will help you and your child during this time.
- Practice newly learned skills at home with your child and family.
- Trust your knowledge of your child when making decisions in regards to their care.
- Take good care of yourself. Find ways to relax and recharge (self care). It is important for you to have your own support through family, friends and services that may be available to you.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT:

### **Institute of Families for Child and Youth Mental Health (Formerly F.O.R.C.E. Society for Kids Mental Health)**

Parents in Residence and Youth in Residence support youth and families of children/youth with mental health challenges through peer support, education, system navigation Helpful Resources and resource sharing. 1.855.887.8004 [www.familysmart.ca](http://www.familysmart.ca)

### **Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre:**

A provincial resource centre that provides mental health and substance use information, resources and peer support to children, youth and their families from across BC. 1.800.665.1822 [www.keltymentalhealth.ca](http://www.keltymentalhealth.ca)

### **Community Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Services:**

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health)

You can also call 811 for additional help finding a child/youth mental health team in your area.

### **Here to Help BC:**

A comprehensive resource website of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information.

[www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca)

Notes and Questions:



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