

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

SCHOOL-BASED CHILD, YOUTH & FAMILY COUNSELLORS

DESCRIPTION:

This service provides counselling and support for students finding it difficult to function successfully in classroom and school environments. Services include counselling, family support, skill development and psychosocial interventions. Service is provided to all levels of School District 64 schools. Counsellors work in and outside of school classrooms, and in the community.

HISTORY:

The school support service began with Salt Spring Community Services in 1983 as part of the High School Gipsy program. In 1991 it evolved into the current school-based program with three Youth and Family Counsellors. This program was funded by the Ministry for Children and Families until 2002 when the responsibility for these services province-wide were transferred to school districts. Funding limitations reduced staffing to the current two positions. In 2008 the service shifted to strengthen the clinical therapy component.

POPULATION SERVED:

Services are available to children, youth and their families who live on the Southern Gulf Islands and attend school on Salt Spring Island. Service may be extended to students not attending, or who have dropped out of school. Students referred to the service are typically experiencing emotional or behavioural issues that limit their ability to function successfully within the classroom and school environment.

GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

1. Increase engagement with school and/or reduce drop-out rate.
2. Improve self esteem, communication, coping and problem solving skills.
3. Improve family, social and other significant relationships.
4. Increase ability to think clearly and make healthy decisions.

SERVICE DELIVERY PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES:

1. Service delivery will be caring, respectful, safe and open.
2. People will be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Services will be provided in a discreet and confidential manner.
4. Services will be empowering including the provision of advocacy and information.
5. Service delivery will be person-centered including being flexible, individualized and involving the person served in setting the direction of service.
6. Services will be responsive and timely.

SERVICE DELIVERY ACTIVITIES:

1. **Assessment and Goal Planning.** Counsellors work with students, their family and school to develop plans based on the individual needs assessment. This is typically done in collaboration with an Individual Education Plan.
2. **Individual Counselling.** Counsellors provide person-centered and solution-focused short term counselling. Counselling is strength-based and may include social and life skill development.
3. **Family Counselling.** Counsellors provide family-centered and solution-focused counselling that includes the entire family system.
4. **Groups.** Counsellors organize groups at times to address common issues such as communication, social skills or problem solving.
5. **Crisis Intervention.** Counsellors provide support for students and their families facing unusually difficult life situations.
6. **Conflict Resolution and Mediation.** Counsellors help resolve differences by acting as an intermediary between conflicting parties.
7. **Case Management and Coordination.** Counsellors communicate relevant ideas, goals and information between family, school and community supports to ensure services are delivered in an effective and holistic way.
8. **Referral and Advocacy.** Counsellors refer students and their families to other SSICS or community services as needed, and act on their behalf when needed to obtain resources and services.

LOCATION:

Service is provided in schools, community and homes as determined by individual case plans. Confidential meeting space is located at 134 McPhillips Ave (The Core Inn) and wheelchair accessible offices are located at 268 Fulford-Ganges Road and 120 Park Drive (Family Place). Services may also be provided in community locations including schools.

HOURS:

Services are available Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm and after hours as required during the school year (September to June).

STAFF RESOURCES:

One full-time Counsellor Two part-time Clinicians provide services and coordinate the program. One Clinician focuses on younger children attending elementary and the other focuses on middle school students. The Counsellor focuses on middle and high school students. Staff report to the Director of Child, Youth and Community Living Services. Staff are part of the Child and Youth Services Team, a multi-service team including mental health, alcohol and drug, family support, and early childhood services.

ACCESS TO SERVICE:

Services are accessed through the school, typically through the school-based team or counsellor. Students and parents/caregivers may enquire about access to the service directly with program staff or the SSICS Director of Child and Family Services.

STANDARDS/REFERENCES/BEST PRACTICES:

1. CARF accreditation standards
2. Child & Youth Mental Health Plan, MCFD

FUNDING/SPONSORSHIP:

The service is funded by Gulf Islands School District #64

PARTNERSHIPS/KEY CONNECTIONS:

1. School District # 64