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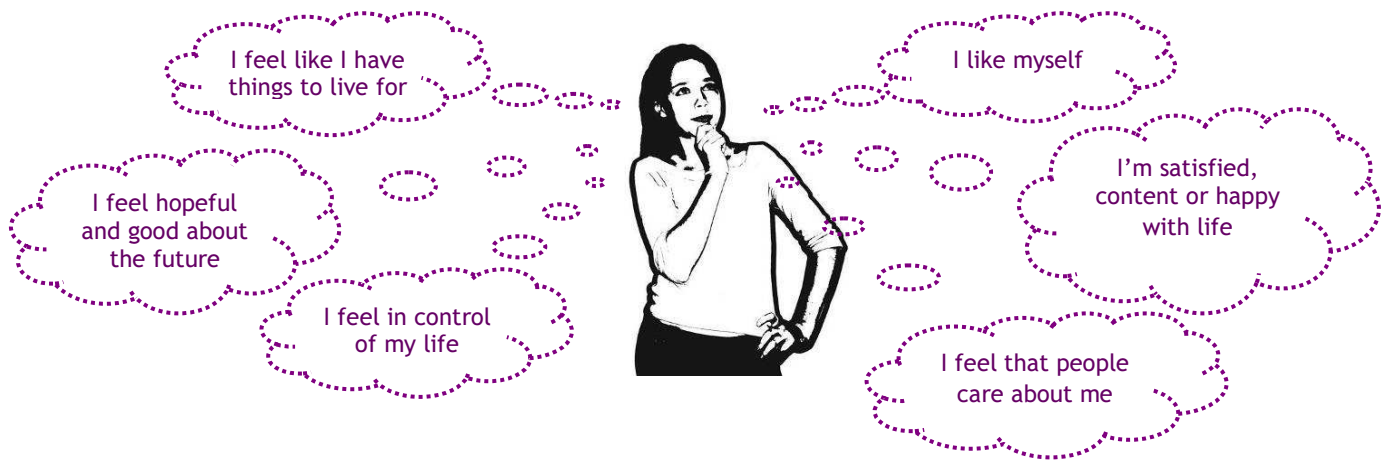
# NEED TO KNOW about...

## Mental Health Services for Children and Youth Fact Sheet for Parents and Caregivers

### What is Mental Health?

Mental health (like our physical health) is a resource for living. It allows us to learn, work, play and find enjoyment in life. It helps us through tough times.

From a child or teen's point of view, mental health means...

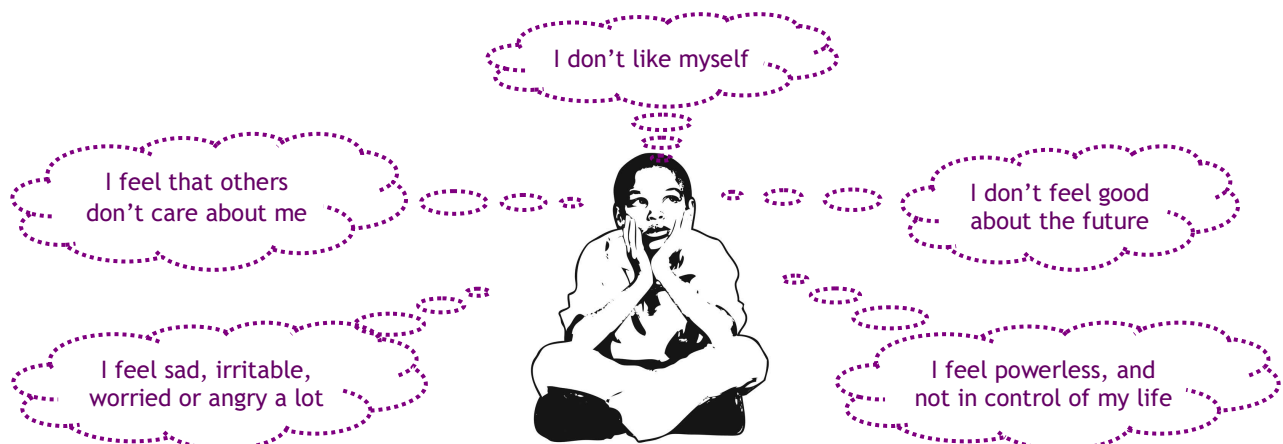


### What is Mental Illness?

People have mental health problems or mental illnesses when problems with thoughts, feelings or behaviours get in the way of functioning at home, school or work.

Everyone feels sad or upset from time to time. But when these feelings are so strong that it's hard to carry on at school or home, then there may be a mental health problem.

From a child or teen's point of view, mental health problems (or mental illnesses) can mean some or all of the following:



Mental health professionals can help children and youth deal with problems with thoughts, feelings or behaviours like:

- Mood problems (anger, anxiety, depression)
- Eating disorders
- Psychosis, schizophrenia
- Addictions (including problems with drugs, alcohol, gaming or gambling)
- Coping with stresses with relationships, school, work and home

## Stigma: Negative Attitudes about Mental Illness

People often feel ashamed, guilty or embarrassed about having a mental health problem (or having a child with a mental health problem). People may believe that the illness is a sign of weakness or that they really have no good reason to feel the way they do. Parents may feel guilty, that they've done something to cause a child's mental illness. And others may blame or judge people who have a mental health problem. This kind of 'stigma' makes things even more difficult for children, youth and families coping with mental health problems. And it's one reason why people don't get the help they need.

It's probably a lot healthier if we all started looking at mental health the way we look at physical health. If our child or teen has stomach pain that makes it hard to go to school, we go to our doctor. And if our child or teen is having emotional pain that makes it hard to carry on at home or school, we should get help too.

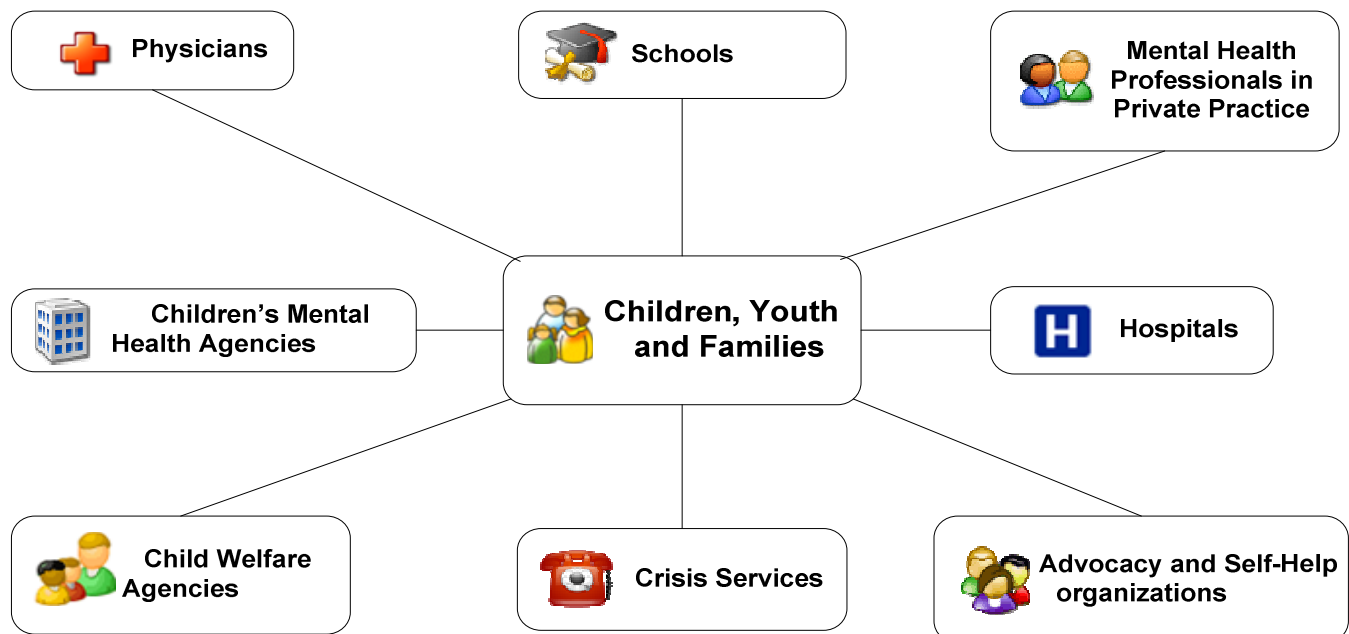
## Parents are the key

A close relationship between parents and children is very important to children's physical and emotional health. But sometimes a close relationship is not enough. Children and youth can still develop mental health problems, even when they have the most caring parents in the world.

The other key role parents play is in being the first to notice that there is a problem, and making sure children and youth get the help they need. Supporting a child with a mental health problem can be overwhelming, so it is essential to take care of your own mental health. Reach out for support from your own network of family, friends and professionals.



## Ways to Get Help for Your Child/Youth Include...



# Types of help and support



## 1. In Case of Crisis or Emergency

During times of crisis or emergency, contact:

- Kid's Help Phone, 1-800-668-6868  
[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- Child, Youth and Family Crisis Line of Eastern Ontario, 1-877-377-7775  
[www.icrs.ca](http://www.icrs.ca)

## 2. Family physicians or pediatricians

One good place to start is by taking your child or teen to see your family doctor or pediatrician. Your doctor can check to see if there are any problems with your child or teen's physical health, and refer you to mental health services as needed.

## 3. Your child or teen's school.

Speak to the teacher if your child or teen is having difficulties at school (poor grades, behaviour problems or conflict with classmates). In some cases, schools can offer help like resource teachers, social workers, and school psychologists.

For students attending college or university, there is help available through Student Health Services.

## 4. Children's Mental Health Centres

- Centre psychosociale pour enfants et familles d'Ottawa, French services, up to age 17, 613-789-2240, [www.centrepsychosocial.ca](http://www.centrepsychosocial.ca)
- Crossroads Children's Centre (English services, up to age 12), 613-723-1623, [www.crossroadschildren.ca](http://www.crossroadschildren.ca).
- Youth Services Bureau (YSB), serving age 12-20, [www.ysb.on.ca](http://www.ysb.on.ca)
- Roberts Smart Centre, serving age 12-17, 613-728-1946, [www.robertssmartcentre.com](http://www.robertssmartcentre.com)

## 5. Hospitals Providing Mental Health Services for Children/Youth

Hospitals also provide various mental health services. You will need a referral from your child's doctor for these services.

- Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) (up to age 16-18), 613-737-7600 [www.cheo.on.ca](http://www.cheo.on.ca)
- Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre (ROMHC) (age 16+), 613-722-6521 [www.theroyal.ca](http://www.theroyal.ca)

## 6. Family Service Centres

Family Service Centres are non-profit, charitable organizations that provide services like counselling for children, youth and families. They generally charge a fee for their services, but have a sliding fee schedule based on family income. .

- Family Service Centre of Ottawa, 613-725-3601 [www.familyservicesottawa.org](http://www.familyservicesottawa.org)
- Catholic Family Services, 613-233-8478 [www.cfsottawa.ca](http://www.cfsottawa.ca)
- Jewish Family Services, 613-722-2225 [www.jfsottawa.com](http://www.jfsottawa.com)

## 7. Addictions Services

- Addictions and Problem Gambling Services of Ottawa, at the Sandy Hill Community Centre, serving youth and adults, 613-789-8941 [www.sandyhillchc.on.ca](http://www.sandyhillchc.on.ca)
- Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre, serving youth aged 13-18. Tel: 613-594-8333 [www.davesmithcentre.org](http://www.davesmithcentre.org)

## 8. Support and Advocacy

These groups are often created by family members who have experienced similar difficulties.

For families of those with mental health problems:

- Hopewell Eating Disorder Support Centre, 613-241-3428, [www.hopewell.ca](http://www.hopewell.ca)
- Parent's Lifeline of Eastern Ontario, supporting parents of youth with mental health problems, [www.pleo.on.ca](mailto:info@pleo.on.ca) info@pleo.on.ca
- Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, Ottawa Region, 613-722-6521, ext. 7775 or 7776, [www.schizophrenia.on.ca](http://www.schizophrenia.on.ca)

## 9. Children's Coordinated Access & Referral to Services

Children and youth must be referred to this program by a professional who works with them (for example, a teacher, social worker, doctor, or psychologist).

This program helps children who have:

- Very complex mental health problems
- Severe difficulties even with the support of many community services

After hearing information about the child or teen, a committee hears information about the child will recommend and refer the family to services that can provide the best support. Tel: 613-288-0426, [coordinatedaccess.ca](http://coordinatedaccess.ca)

## 10. Information about Local Services

Looking for mental health help or information? [www.ementalhealth.ca](http://www.ementalhealth.ca) is a publicly-funded website that provides families with easy to access information about mental health and services in Ottawa and Eastern Ontario.

## Mental Health Professionals in Private Practice

We've listed helpful phone numbers and websites in a section at the end of this resource.

While many mental health professionals work in hospitals or community organizations, others may work in 'private practice'.

In most cases, when you see someone in private practice, you must pay a fee for services. But if you have an extended health insurance plan through your workplace, you may get back at least part of that fee.

Therapists in private practice may have shorter wait times and you also have more choice about who exactly you want to see. It's important to make sure that your therapist is qualified to provide mental health care.

### Who is qualified to provide counselling/therapy?

Therapy and counselling can be given by any professional who has training in therapy or counselling. This usually means professional like:

- Psychologists
- Physicians (psychiatrists, paediatricians or family doctors)
- Registered nurses
- Social workers
- Psychotherapists (provided they are appropriately licensed and regulated).

In Ontario, all professionals calling themselves "psychotherapists" are regulated by the Psychotherapy Act. The Act protects the public by making sure that only competent, trained and licensed professionals can give therapy. In addition, other trained professionals not in the above categories may also give therapy, as long as they have demonstrated sufficient training, and as long as they are members of the new College of Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists (as defined by the Health System Improvements Act of 2007.) This includes physicians, psychologists, social workers, nurses, among others.

**Please remember!** In many places, **anyone** can advertise themselves as a therapist or counsellor, even if they have absolutely no training at all. **Do not see a (non-regulated) therapist or counsellor who does not belong to a regulatory body or professional association.** There is no way to check their competence, and if you run into problems, there is no way to deal with your complaints.

## Types of mental health professionals in private practice:

### 1. Psychologists and Psychological Associates

Psychologists (Ph.D) and Psychological Associates:

- Are licensed mental health professionals
- Specialize in the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of mental health conditions
- Assess mental health through a Psychological Evaluation)
- Can check for learning problems (like ADHD or learning disabilities) through a Psychoeducational Assessment

Psychologists and psychological associates can not prescribe medications. They are licensed through the College of Psychologists of Ontario. Web: [www.cpo.on.ca](http://www.cpo.on.ca).

### 2. Psychiatrists

Psychiatrists are medical doctors (MD) who are also licensed mental health professionals. They specialize in the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment (including medication and other treatments such as psychotherapy). To see a psychiatrist, you'll need a referral from another physician.

**Note that psychiatrists are covered by Ontario's health insurance plan, so it is not necessary to pay privately.**

In Ontario, all physicians are licensed through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Web: <http://www.cpso.on.ca>.

### 3. Social Workers

Social workers are professionals with university degrees (a Bachelor's or Master's degree in social work BSW or MSW). They can:

- Provide support and intervene in a crisis
- Give counselling and therapy
- Help connect youth and families to community resources, financial assistance or other helpful programs.

In Ontario, social workers licensed with the Ontario College of Social Work, are designated as Registered Social Workers (RSW).

To find a social worker in private practice in Ontario, visit [www.FindASocialWorker.ca](http://www.FindASocialWorker.ca) .

### 4. Child and Youth Counsellors (CYC)

Child and Youth Counsellors work with children and youth in hospitals, schools, private homes and group homes. Working with other mental health professionals, they help design and implement therapeutic programs.

In Ontario, CYCs are represented by the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Counsellors (OACYC). Web: [www.oacyc.org](http://www.oacyc.org).

### 5. Other Health Professionals

Other health professionals may also provide mental health care services in private practice, like:

- Psychiatric nurses
- Occupational therapists
- Speech pathologists

## What is counselling or therapy?

There are many types of counselling or therapy. The most common are “talk therapies” where you talk with a professional to find ways to deal with your stress and problems. Common types of talk therapy:

- **Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT):** Helps children and youth change the negative, depressive thoughts and behaviours that contribute to depression, and replaces them with more helpful thoughts and behaviours.
- **Dialectical behaviour therapy:** Helps children and youth build skills so that they can:
  - Focus on what is happening in the moment (mindfulness)
  - Communicate more effectively and have more positive relationships with others
  - Learn to cope with upsetting feelings
  - Control their emotions a little better
- **Interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT):** Helps children and youth resolve tension and conflict that can contribute to depression.
- **Solution-focused therapy:** Focuses on children’s strengths. It helps them to focus on what they would like to change in their future, and what they can do to ‘get there’.



Other types of therapy involve music, art, hypnosis, or other techniques.

### What therapy is ‘not’:

Please remember that therapy is **not** simply a therapist ‘talking some sense into’ a child or teen, or telling them what to do. Instead, it is a process of working together on goals that everyone agrees to. It is essential that the children, youth and parents feel they are all working toward the same thing.

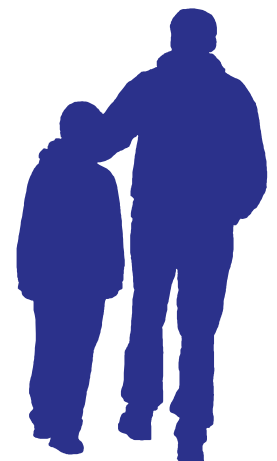
### Ways to provide therapy:

- **Individual therapy:** this is one on one counselling with a mental health professional. This is very common when adults seek help with a mental health problem. With children and youth, the family plays a much larger and central role.
- **Family therapy** means that the patient and other family members meet with the therapist together. No matter how problems like stress or depression started, they usually always affect the family. So the entire family is part of the solution.
- **Group therapy** means that the patient and others with similar issues meet together with the therapist. Although it may seem scary at first, it is a powerful way to get help and support. After all, who else knows and understands better than others going through a similar experience?

### Goals for therapy

Goals that children, youth and parents often have for therapy (although there are many others):

- Better moods (for example, feeling happier, less anxious)
- Better behaviour
- Doing better at school
- Getting along better with others
- Everyone getting along better at home



# What You Can Do Before Seeing a Mental Health Professional

## The First Visit

During the first visit, mental health professionals will ask questions to learn more about your situation and learn whether or not they can be helpful to you.

This is also your chance to ask questions to make sure the professional is someone you want to see. Here are some questions you might want to ask:



### Questions about the Professional

- “What is your training?”
- “What is your experience in situations like this?”

### Treatment questions

- “What type of treatment would you recommend?”
- “How will this help?”
- “How long will the treatment take?”
- “Are there any side effects or problems with what you are recommending?”
- “How many visits are needed?”

### Costs

- “Do we need to pay for this service, or can it be paid some other way (for example, OHIP or extended health insurance plan)?”

## Confidentiality

In general, everything that a patient says is confidential, which means the professional cannot share that information with others unless the patient gives permission.

But there are a few exceptions. Mental health professionals must share information if they are concerned that:

1. Someone’s life may be in danger
2. A child (a person up until the age of 16) who has been, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

By law, youth are allowed to make treatment decisions for themselves if they understand the consequences of these decisions. This includes deciding who can see their health information. If youth don’t want to share information with you or others, mental health professionals will respect their wishes. At the same time, therapists will work with youth and families to rebuild communication.

## If you do not feel comfortable with your mental health professional

Speak to the therapist and share your feelings. A competent professional will be able to explore this with you, in a way that doesn’t leave you feeling blamed or bad. You might say something like, “Sorry, but I don’t feel comfortable with ....” or “I don’t think this is the right fit”. Approaching it this way, you may be able to work out a solution with your therapist. Or you may wish to try to find another professional to work with.

## Where to find help in Eastern Ontario

- In a crisis?** Child, Youth and Family Crisis Line for Eastern Ontario, 613-260-2360 or toll-free, 1-377-877-7775
- Looking for mental health help?** [www.eMentalHealth.ca](http://www.eMentalHealth.ca) is a bilingual directory of mental health services and resources for Ottawa, Eastern Ontario and Canada.
- Renfrew County:** Phoenix Centre for Children, Youth and Families, with offices in Renfrew and Pembroke. 613-735-2374 or toll-free 1-800-465-1870, [www.renc.igs.net/~phoenix](http://www.renc.igs.net/~phoenix)
- Leeds and Grenville County:** Child and Youth Wellness Centre, with offices in Brockville, Elgin, Gananoque and Prescott. 613-498-4844, [www.cywc.net](http://www.cywc.net)
- Lanark County:** Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth, with offices in Carleton Place, Smiths Falls and Perth. 613-283-8260, [www.opendoors.on.ca](http://www.opendoors.on.ca)
- To find a Psychologist anywhere in Ontario:** College of Psychologists of Ontario, 1-800-489-8388, [www.cpo.on.ca](http://www.cpo.on.ca)

## Where to find help in Ottawa

- Youth Services Bureau**, for ages 12-20, 613-562-3004
- Family Service Centre of Ottawa**, 613-725-3601, [www.familyservicesottawa.org](http://www.familyservicesottawa.org)
- Catholic Family Services**, 613-233-8418, [www.cfssfc-ottawa.org](http://www.cfssfc-ottawa.org)
- Jewish Family Services**, 613-722-2225, [www.jfsottawa.com](http://www.jfsottawa.com)
- The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre** (by physician's referral), 613-737-7600 ext. 2496. For more information on our programs, [www.cheo.on.ca](http://www.cheo.on.ca)
- **Psychological Services at the University of Ottawa** 613 562-5289. Services are provided by interns working under the supervision of registered psychologists on a sliding-fee scale. Services include child, youth, and family assessment and therapy.
- To find a Psychologist in Ottawa:** Call the Ottawa Academy of Psychology referral service, 613-235-2529. Listing many, but not all, Ottawa psychologists, [www.ottawa-psychologists.org/find.htm](http://www.ottawa-psychologists.org/find.htm)

## About This Document

Reviewed by the Mental Health Information Committee at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and by members of the Child and Youth Mental Health Information Network ([www.cymhin.ca](http://www.cymhin.ca)). Special thanks to Vera Klein, Parents' Lifelines of Eastern Ontario and Cynthia Clark, Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, Ottawa Region.

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**Disclaimer:** Information in this fact sheet may or may not apply to your child. Your health care provider is the best source of information about your child's health.