

## What do Psychologist's do?

Clinical Psychologists are health care professionals trained in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health issues. They may work with people individually, with parents, or the entire family. Psychologists help people figure out how they think and feel about problems in their lives. They help people make changes in their behaviour and cope with difficulties and stressors they are facing. Psychologists also help people have an understanding of their cognitive and socio-emotional functioning and provide recommendations to work with areas of strength and remediate areas of weakness.

## What is a Psychologist?

Psychologists are professionals who have completed a Doctoral Degree (Ph. D. or Psy.D.) specializing in Psychology. As part of this training, Psychologists have completed extensive coursework, research and clinical training. They have also completed a residency in clinical psychology.

Psychologists working with children have focused their training on the assessment and treatment of children's cognitive, developmental, socio-emotional, and behavioural functioning, including the diagnosis of mental health disorders.

To practice psychology in Canada professionals must be registered in their province. This protects the public by making sure that professionals have met, and continue to meet, the highest standards of professional practice and ethical conduct. In BC, psychologists are regulated by the College of Psychologists of British Columbia (CPBC). In BC, only a member of the CPBC may call oneself a psychologist.

Additional information about Psychologists can be found at the website <http://www.psychologists.bc.ca/faq.html>

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4480 Oak Street, Vancouver BC, V6H 3V4  
604-875-2345, Ext. 2147  
1-888-300-3088 Ext. 2147  
Fax: 604-875-3230  
[www.bcchildrens.ca](http://www.bcchildrens.ca)

## THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN PEDIATRIC AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Psychologists at B.C. Children's Hospital work in alliance with medical and/or mental health teams and can take on different roles depending on the referral question and the needs of the child. Common referral issues include the assessment and treatment of psychological symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety); assessment of learning issues; adjustment to a new medical diagnoses; coping with chronic illness, hospitalization, and medical procedures; as well as, acute and post-traumatic stress.

### Pediatric Psychology Services

Paediatric Psychology includes both inpatient and outpatient services, and has a variety of specialized teams, such as Neurology, Pain and Symptom Management, Oncology and Haematology, Biochemical Diseases, ICU, and Surgery. We most often see families who are thrown into a stressful or unfamiliar situation when a child becomes ill. Our approach is family-centred, with a focus on problem-solving in the context of a medical condition.

### Mental Health Services

Mental health services at BC Children's include inpatient and outpatient psychiatry, as well as specialized teams, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Neuropsychiatry, Eating Disorders, and Mood and Anxiety disorders. Our role as psychologists working on mental health teams is varied and can include assessment, diagnosis, consultation, education, and therapy.

Assessments conducted at BC Children's Hospital are often done by multi-disciplinary teams, with the psychologist looking at one part of the picture. The psychologist's role may be to help with

differential diagnosis, or to provide a brief and focused assessment (i.e., a consultation) of the child's functioning. At other times, the psychologist may provide a more in-depth understanding of the child's emotional, social, behavioural, and cognitive functioning.

Psychologists' assessments can be used to provide information to the medical team, the family, and community professionals, with a written report about the information found in the assessment. The psychologist will usually meet with the family to discuss the assessment findings. After assessment, the psychologist often provides a set of recommendations to help the child in a number of different settings such as school and home.

### Intervention

Psychological treatment can take a variety of forms including play therapy, crisis intervention, individual/supportive therapy, or pain/symptom management. Therapy is matched to the needs of the child and family, as well as the presenting problem. Time-lines are flexible and are based on individual needs. Psychologists use a family approach and ensure that all family members are supported.

## PSYCHOLOGY AT BC CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Child Clinical and Pediatric Psychologists, such as those found at BCCH, specialize in practice with children, adolescents, and families. Many of our staff have completed post-doctoral fellowships, with additional education and training in sub-specialities of psychology. As such, psychologists at BCCH bring a great deal of expertise to the unique problems seen within their clinical area. In addition to this, BCCH psychologists are also involved with research, teaching, and program development/ evaluation.

As a provincial resource, the hospital's mandate is to work with children and families from across the province facing complex and multiple challenges. Psychology at BC Children's Hospital provides services across a wide range of clinics for both medical and mental health problems.

For further information about our services, please contact the Department of Psychology at 604-875-2345 or refer to the Department of Psychology webpage at <http://www.bcchildrens.ca/Services/ClinicalDiagnosticFamilyServices/Psychology/default.com>