

How Can a Social Worker Help?

Your child's medical or mental health condition can cause a great deal of family stress. Your child, as well as other family members, can sometimes have fears and worries which affect relationships and the ability to carry out daily responsibilities. Family members and caregivers may have to adjust to changes in routine and extra financial needs.

Here at Children's and Women's Health Centre, all of our social workers have a master's degree from an accredited university. We work for Children's and Women's Hospital and we are an important part of the clinical team caring for your child and your family. We do not work for the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

We have the skills, understanding and experience to help your family deal with a child who has a medical or mental health condition. Some of the ways a social worker can help are:

- Supporting you during periods of crisis.
- Providing one-on-one counselling for your child or teen.
- Providing counselling for parents and family members.
- Helping you find community resources, whether it is for

financial, home support or other community supports.

- Advocating for you in the hospital and in the community.

What Services are Available for My Family?

Family Counselling

Meeting with the social worker is an opportunity for you to discuss concerns about your child, as well as personal and family stress. Medical and mental health conditions can impact your whole family's functioning. The social worker can help you shed light on issues, work through difficult decisions and plan solutions. Some social workers work on teams who provide longer term treatment for chronic illness such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis, kidney problems, attention deficit disorder, or eating disorders. Others work on teams who deal with short-term hospitalizations who provide crisis counseling but can refer you to community counselling as needed

Loss and Grief Counselling

When an illness results in a loss, family members experience a range of difficult feelings. Some illnesses are life threatening. However, there are many types of other losses associated with a medical or mental health condition. The social workers can help your family begin to cope with the loss through individual, family and/or group

counselling. Additionally the social worker will be aware of community resources that may assist you in coping with your grief and loss.

Practical Assistance

You may need practical help as a result of a medical or mental health condition. This can take many forms such as:

- needing a place to stay while your child is receiving treatment,
- needing financial assistance with practical needs,
- navigating the hospital or health care system,
- sorting out how to get community services.

A social worker can be an advocate and help you get the services to meet your practical needs

Community Support

A social worker can help you to plan the care for your child at home and in your community while considering the needs of your whole family. This can include a comprehensive discharge plan that includes community resources

Family Support Groups

Social workers lead, or know about, many support groups where family members meet and share with others experiencing similar concerns.

Dealing with Feelings

Children may have anger, fear and other difficult feelings. Some social workers

offer play, art or group therapy to help your child feel more in control about what is happening during his or her illness and treatment. A social worker can help other children in your family, your child's school and community understand your child's illness and needs. The social worker can also refer your child to community resources for ongoing counselling

How Can I Contact a Social Worker in the Hospital?

Social work services are available to families coming to the outpatient clinics and to those who have a child in the hospital. A social worker is part of your child's health care team at the hospital. Here are the ways that you can meet with a social worker:

- A social worker may come and meet with you as part of your child's routine care.
- You may be referred to a social worker by a doctor, nurse or other health care professional.
- You can ask a staff person to put you in touch with a social worker.
- You can call directly to the main social work office.

Contact a Social Worker at the Social Work Office:

Phone: 604-875-2149

Phone from within the hospital:

Local 2149

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Understanding Social Work Services



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