

# WRAPAROUND

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## Questions and Answers for Family Physicians about the Child & Youth Mental Health Substance Use West Kootenay Local Action Team Wraparound Initiative

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### Dear Family Physicians

Like many small communities, the barriers to receiving timely and integrated mental health and substance use services in this region include wait lists for services, lack of coordination of services, and communication issues between service agencies. In order to address part of this problem the West Kootenay Local Action Team (WK LAT) is becoming more familiar with Family-Centred Practice principals and particularly how these relate to Wraparound service.

Over the next six months the WK LAT will work collaboratively with key provincial, regional and community partners to test a Family-Centred Practice approach through school, medical home and community-driven wraparound tests of change. The type of wraparound test, whether school, medical home or community will depend on where the referral originates from. Several members from the WK LAT are interested in leading these tests with additional support from the LAT, Wraparound Working Group, a Resource and Parent Coach, and visiting CYMHSU professionals from lead agencies.

Approximately 25% of children and youth who are referred for CYMHSU services and supports in the West Kootenay region have moderate to complex needs and require coordinated service delivery. A small sample group from this patient population will serve as the referral source for the proposed wraparound tests of change.

### *Q: Who are the people involved with the West Kootenay Local Action Team?*

**A.** The WK LAT is a group of local doctors, clinicians, counsellors, parents, youth, schools, agencies and others in the region working together to increase the number of children, youth and their families receiving timely access to integrated mental health and substance use services and supports throughout the West Kootenay region.

The WK LAT is part of a provincial Child & Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative, which is a partnership between Doctors of BC and the BC government, and involves an unprecedented number of stakeholders around the province.

### *Q: How will Wraparound provide a different experience for children, youth and families?*

**A.** Youth and families report that the experience of having a team of supportive care providers and family/friends meeting regularly with them to be highly effective. Families say they appreciate not having to tell their story over and over again, and that they feel relief when everyone is aware of what each wraparound team members' role and responsibilities are. This increases feelings of "being cared for" and "in connection" to the people helping them. The informal supports (family, friends, coaches, neighbours, spiritual community members) that attend wraparound team meetings provide an

an additional network of support so that families gain a healthy independence from the system and start to make steps towards requiring less professional services and care.

What makes Wraparound unique is that it champions parents as experts in their children's lives and prioritizes youth and family voice, and choice. This means identifying the goals that are most important to the family, building upon the strengths of each family member and the people important in their lives, and using outcomes to guide the need for changes to the plan. Wraparound aims to build the problem-solving skills, coping skills, and self-efficacy of the youth and family members. And it seeks to ensure that families have the community supports they may need when more formal supports and services end.

### **Q. How can a Family Physician be involved in Wraparound?**

**A.** Family Physicians are important members of Wraparound Teams but it is difficult for them to attend regular meetings due to time constraints and billing issues. Doctors have asked the WK LAT to develop Communication Protocols for GPs that include the family identifying one person on the wraparound team who will act as the primary contact for the physician. This means you may be able to attend and bill for the first Wraparound Team meeting, and then continue to be involved and updated by the patient or a primary contact.

The wraparound process delineates specific roles for team members, including natural support persons, and detailed conditions for interventions, including specifying roles each person will play in specific circumstances. Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for plans.

The role of a designated resource coordinator is critical to ensure the process is adhered to and that the principles of the strength-based person-/family-centred approach are held fast. This role helps guide the team through the phases of wraparound, ensuring a commitment to "remain at the table," despite challenges and

setbacks, until the needs of the youth and family are met and can be sustained without the wraparound team. The resource coordinator doesn't have to have all of the answers, but rather a commitment in getting the right people to the table.

The team reviews accomplishments and progress towards goals and makes adjustments to the plan as necessary. As the team nears its goals, preparations are made for the youth and family to transition out of formal Wraparound. The hope is that they will have the skills and plans to support them in their continued successful connections with their family and community without formal facilitation.

### **Q. What are local pathways?**

**A.** When a child, youth or family, is in distress they often turn to their doctor, school counsellor or a community service. The WK LAT Wraparound Initiative seeks to develop locally agreed upon pathways for youth with moderate to severe mental health and substance use issues to clarify which professionals can connect around a family. At all steps, local agreements respect agency mandates and embody "walking along side" and not "doing to" children, youth and families.

### **Q. Where can I get more information or make a referral for my patient?**

For more information please contact Rachel Schmidt, Shared Care Project Manager at [rschmidt@divisionsbc.ca](mailto:rschmidt@divisionsbc.ca) or 250.608.0753. You can also find the entire Wraparound Referral and Information package on the Division's website <https://divisionsbc.ca/kb/resourcesformembers>.

If you would like to refer a youth and their family to the WK LAT Wraparound Initiative, please review the electronic Referral Form which outlines referral protocols and complete if you think your patient and their family may be a good fit for Wraparound. Please ensure to review the Parent Letter and Consent Form with your patient.