

· F O U N D R Y ·

# Mental Health and Substance Use Support Services

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# Introduction

**Foundry offers a range of mental health and substance use (MHSU) services so that young people and their families/caregivers have options that aim to best meet their needs and goals. Foundry is committed to offering services along an intervention continuum, from health promotion and prevention to early intervention and treatment. It is important to reflect this continuum by using the more generalized language of “mental health” or “mental ill-health” rather than “mental disorders” and “substance use services and supports” rather than “addictions services.”**

When young people and their families/caregivers access a Foundry centre seeking MHSU services, staff welcome them warmly and focus on listening, understanding and getting to know them. This is the beginning stage of building a therapeutic relationship. They are offered interactive, tablet-based self-report screening tools. After reviewing the screening tools and considering the young person’s goals, a service provider may encourage them to participate in a walk-in counselling session, have a more comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment or meet with a medical services provider.

Walk-in counselling uses a one-at-a-time approach. It may be a single session therapy for a youth or family/caregiver, and it can be the entry point into Foundry’s various services. Core mental health and substance use interventions are organized within the Integrated Stepped Care Model (ISCM) and include peer support, assessment, individual therapy, family interventions, psychiatric consultation, pharmacotherapy and group interventions (i.e., core groups offered across all centres, as well as specific groups based on community input).

**Mental health and substance use support services are also offered virtually, through the provincial virtual services team and in most Foundry centres.**

For more information, please see the “Virtual Services” section of the [Service Model Guide](#).

**Foundry’s work includes ensuring we create culturally safe and respectful environments for equity-denied groups including IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) communities.**

We recognize our role and responsibility as a white settler organization in calling out and dismantling colonialism and racism in the work we do.

Our journey includes committing to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action, the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and the recommendations of the report “In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care.”

As part of the integrated team, family physicians and nurse practitioners offer services that include pharmacotherapy, addictions medicine (e.g., Opioid Agonist Therapy), support with metabolic monitoring and eating disorders, gender-affirming care and shared care with psychiatrists. In addition, substance use-specific services can include community education and engagement, harm reduction supplies distribution, overdose prevention training and other supports, which are often provided by Peer Support Workers. Vocational counsellors may also support young people with their mental health and substance use concerns.

As with all Foundry services, in mental health and substance use, an integrated team of service providers work alongside each other. Services are linked and coordinated, with everyone communicating and sharing information to provide a seamless experience for youth and families/caregivers.

# Indigenous Healing

**Foundry values Indigenous knowledges, healing practices and medicine, and centres integrate them to support Indigenous young people, focusing specifically on relationship building and trauma-informed practices. We value the opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous healers and Elders, and make space for each community to do their healing work. A dedicated cultural room ventilated for smudging and healing practices is incorporated into centre building design.**

All Foundry service providers who conduct mental health and substance use assessments and interventions are educated about the history and impacts of residential schools and Indian hospitals (an adaptation of Call to Action 1 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada)<sup>1</sup> and understand the importance of considering the impact of these experiences on youth and their families/caregivers. Foundry Central Office (FCO) is committed to fostering a deeper understanding of the systemic roots of colonization and is actively working with centres to develop teaching methods and ways of working that directly oppose oppression in all its forms.

# Serving Youth with Mental Health Concerns

**Foundry was designed to close the gap in prevention and early intervention services in the mental health system. Our priority has been offering easily accessible and low-barrier services to reach youth early in the development of mental ill-health (i.e., emerging, mild to moderate mental ill-health), to meet the needs of young people and prevent significant negative outcomes that can often last throughout their lives.**

Serving youth with moderate to severe mental ill-health and complex needs has also been part of our model, through the moderate to high intensity services we offer at Foundry and through our partnerships with specialist services. Now more than ever, between a global pandemic, social and economic isolation, employment loss, climate change, the recognition of race inequalities, rising rent prices, student debt, the toxic drug crisis and increased violence towards 2SLGBTQIA+ young people, the stressors on youth are unprecedented. Our youth are experiencing increased rates of anxiety, post-traumatic stress, depression and behavioural challenges compared to what is typically seen in young people in BC.<sup>2</sup>

**In the international network of integrated youth services, two concepts that speak to the needs of youth have recently come to the forefront and have implications for Foundry services – the “missing middle” and complexity.**

**With a focus on services, Australia’s Orygen describes the missing middle as:**

- Youth with moderate to severe mental ill-health whose needs are not met by existing mental health services;
- Youth who access primary care but require a specialist service that is not available; or
- Youth who access mental health services but not at the duration or level of care needed.

**Beyond the missing middle, Australia’s headspace has been considering complex mental health and has defined complexity as intersecting domains that include the service system (the missing middle above), the workforce (providers’ perspective based on training, experience or confidence) and client characteristics. While complexity is often interchangeable with severity (e.g., acute psychosis) and may include high psychological distress and chronic suicidality, complexity may also be characterized by co-morbidity such as trauma history or substance misuse; not employed, in education or training (NEET); family dysfunction; homelessness; and other social determinants of health.**

Our role at Foundry is to serve youth through the services available at Foundry centres, including partnership services located in the community. Integrated youth services are optimized when we look beyond the walls of the Foundry centre and move into co-designing services and pathways with partners to address the range and diversity of young people’s needs. Foundry services and partnerships are established in such a way that we support youth along the continuum from mild to moderate to severe mental ill-health, as we endeavour to address complexity. We will continue to develop and evolve our services, with FCO overseeing training our workforce, pursuing policy changes towards ongoing service transformation and seeking funding to bolster resources.

With five core service streams at Foundry, young people have the option of addressing their mental health and substance use concerns through individual, group and family interventions, getting employment support, attending to their physical health or medical needs, or meeting peers and learning life skills in wellness groups. Access to walk-in counselling can help a young person having a difficult time with a relationship and can also offer support to a youth with diagnosable depression while they are on the waitlist for Child and Youth Mental Health. Youth with anxiety could attend a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy group offered jointly with Adult Mental Health or see a prescriber for psychiatric medications. Alternatively, a youth with psychosis may come through Foundry’s screening and be referred on to the Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) Program co-located at the centre or, in collaboration with EPI, they may be supported to present at the local hospital.

**Through services at the centres and through triaging or complex case rounds, Foundry providers find ways to support youth on their journey through care.**



# Core Psychotherapies

The core psychotherapeutic modalities provided at all Foundry centres include:

- **Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT):** SFBT is the modality used in walk-in counselling, typically in the form of a single session, and also as part of ISCM as a brief therapy (up to six sessions) for a variety of concerns.
- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** CBT is offered in group interventions as well as individual, short-term therapy (up to 12 sessions) and is suitable for mood, anxiety, problematic substance use, disordered eating and trauma concerns.
- **Motivational Interviewing (MI):** MI is foundational to supporting behaviour change and engagement overall in health care. MI has informed substance use interventions and eating disorders treatment and is known to facilitate engagement in services with youth presenting with psychotic symptoms.
- **Emotion-Focused Family Therapy (EFFT):** EFFT involves working with families/caregivers to support them in acquiring and mastering skills to support their young person. It is a relatively new family therapy approach that was developed for people dealing with eating disorders. EFFT has increasing evidence of effectiveness more generally in mental health and can provide skills and resources to clinicians and Family Peer Supporters to more effectively support youth and their families/caregivers.

The four core therapies are standard across all centres so that youth and families/caregivers can experience consistent interventions across the province and so that members of the MHSU and Indigenous MHSU interdisciplinary teams are able to access the support of a provincial network for ongoing practice support, such as training and communities of practice. Other evidence-based therapies may be offered at centres where staff have the training and experience, such as Interpersonal Therapy for depression or other forms of family therapy.

## Characteristics of Foundry's Core Therapies

The core therapies were selected by Foundry's Clinical Collaborative & Knowledge Exchange (formerly called the Provincial Clinical Working Group), because of the following qualities:

- They are commonly practiced by MHSU staff (MI, CBT);
- They provide a low-intensity therapy option for youth and families/caregivers (SFBT); and
- They provide specific skill enhancements for staff in working with families/caregivers (EFFT).

**“We call upon all governments to ensure that the rights to health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples, and specifically of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, are recognized and protected on an equitable basis.”**

Call for Justice 3.1, The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

# Serving Youth Who Use Substances

**It is well documented that the substance use system of care across British Columbia is a patchwork of disconnected resources that struggle with collaboration and can be difficult for people to navigate.<sup>3</sup> As a colonial system, health care does not provide equitable access or appropriate care for everyone, and we recognize our role in changing the system. Our goal at Foundry is to find ways to link and connect substance use resources for young people and families/caregivers so that no one falls through the cracks.**

**Work is underway to develop a shared strategy to ensure that FCO and the Foundry network:**

- Support centres to clarify their role within each local community of care;
- Clearly understand how services at centres connect with each community's other substance use resources;
- Develop local strategies to offer a full continuum of supports without duplication;
- Prioritize perspectives and approaches that honour Indigenous Peoples' self-determination;
- Consider the diversity of youth accessing services and engage them with intention;
- Make navigation easier for young people and families/caregivers;
- Understand Foundry Virtual BC's role in the provincial care system; and
- Continue to become a strong and connected community of substance use supports.

At Foundry, a young person can feel confident that their needs can be met in their community, no matter what relationship they have with substance use. Their connection to Foundry means they will have someone to help facilitate and support them on their care journey.

**“We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long- term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.”**

Call to Action 19, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

## Core Substance Use Interventions

**While young people can seek support for their substance use concerns via Foundry’s same-day services or as part of general health and wellness services, the goal is to have a full continuum of services available within each community – from health promotion and prevention to intensive intervention.**

### Health promotion

Following best practice guidelines outlined by the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), Foundry supports and collaborates with the substance use health promotion efforts underway in various school districts and community non-profit agencies in BC. We use our website—[foundrybc.ca](https://foundrybc.ca)—to provide youth- and family- centred health literacy material about substance use. Our provincial partnership with BC Children’s Hospital not only supports our website but also makes health promotion material available to our centres. Foundry centres may also provide public education on topics related to substance use and substance use disorders as part of a recurring series open to community members, youth and service providers.

### What is health promotion?

According to the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, “Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is therefore seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being.”<sup>4</sup>

Health promotion activities support overall health and focus on areas such as social emotional learning, emotional intelligence and physical wellness.

## Prevention

Foundry's continuum of substance use services includes prevention, with the goal of avoiding harm and decreasing the impact of ongoing challenges.

Every centre offers or is able to access (on site or virtually) substance use support services in the area of prevention, in addition to health promotion. The following are examples of substance use services that are part of prevention:

- Wellness activities or social groups;
- Health literacy;
- Early screening;
- Walk-in Counselling;
- Education groups;
- Relapse support groups; and
- Counselling support groups.

### What is prevention?

Prevention is defined by the Institute for Work & Health as “a wide range of activities — known as ‘interventions’ — aimed at reducing risks or threats to health.”<sup>5</sup>

## Screening

Routine screening is part of a young person's first visit and annual follow-up when accessing physical health care, walk-in counselling and peer support services, using the substance use screener in the GAIN-SS survey. Screening should also take place as identified by clinical indicators and clinical judgement. The Foundry website — [foundrybc.ca](https://foundrybc.ca) — also offers online self-assessments that can serve as screeners for harms and disorders related to substance use, as a way for young people and their families/caregivers to better understand their relationship to the substances they are using. This promotes self-understanding, which is key to promoting health and helping young people seek out alternatives to substance use when trying to cope with what is happening in their lives.

## Harm reduction

Foundry supports a pragmatic, evidence-informed approach to youth wellness. Harm reduction practices are life-saving interventions that seek to encourage young people to engage in care and build connections with service providers. We support centres to offer harm reduction interventions as needed throughout a young person's journey.

Harm reduction practices include but are not limited to safe injection supplies, substance use education, drug checking, safer sex supplies and education, Take Home Naloxone kits and overdose prevention training. Such interventions aim to enhance knowledge, skills, resources and supports in order for individuals, families/caregivers and communities to be safer and healthier. Foundry centres are connected to their local Health Authority Harm Reduction Coordinator as part of offering harm reduction supplies and training. Each centre has its own regional issues and addresses them as part of their ongoing harm reduction service planning and reviews.

## Relapse support and after care

Young people are often referred to Foundry following treatment or after a stay in a hospital or another facility. They may be on a path to recovery and request follow-up for support. Relapse prevention and support may include options such as peer support, walk-in counselling, referral to social services and SMART Recovery and other groups.

## Integrated stepped care substance use services

Substance use services at Foundry are developed to meet a wide range of interests and needs—from drop-in groups to counselling appointments to addictions medicine, Foundry centres strive to offer services that youth may find helpful at various points in their relationship with substances. Foundry develops the services within a framework called stepped care, to support the many different service providers to work together to offer as integrated an experience as possible. For more information about the specific services offered, please see “Implementing ISCM Services” in the [Service Model Guide](#).

# Family Inclusive Services

**Foundry offers services to families/caregivers with the belief that supporting them with knowledge, skills and tools promotes hope and better wellness outcomes for all. Families/caregivers often provide information during an assessment, can receive education aimed at understanding their young person’s health concerns and can participate in family peer support, coaching or therapy.**

The continuum of family inclusive services includes peer support, support and education groups, and direct therapeutic interventions. As Foundry continues to grow and evolve, we are committed to building out our responsiveness to family needs.

For more information, please see the “Family Inclusive Services” section of the [Service Model Guide](#).

# Tools and Resources

Visit [The Foundry Learning Centre](#) to access these tools and resources.

- Focus on Centre-Based Integrated Substance Use Services

## References

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