



BY COMING TOGETHER. WE'RE NOT ALONE!
www.fbcyicn.ca

One-to-One Support Confidentiality Policy

Like all young people, youth in and from care are diverse individuals with their own goals, stories and talents; however, their experience in care means they face specific challenges and barriers as they pursue their goals and overall well-being. Without the support many of their peers experience well into adulthood, our one-to-one support program is one way we address this gap. Young people in or from **care** in B.C. ages 14-24 can connect with our compassionate and knowledgeable staff to receive guidance about different barriers they may be facing. We offer support by listening, asking questions, providing referrals, creating support plans to meet individual needs and individual **advocacy** to help young people best navigate the system.

Staff are not trained counselors but can assist young people to reach their own decisions about how they can overcome these barriers. Young people can talk to us about finding housing, employment and training opportunities, educational goals, relationship issues, addictions, concerns with their experiences in **care**, and navigating the MCFD complaints process etc.

From anywhere in the province youth in or from care ages 14-24 can access support through **email**, staff Facebook and Skype accounts, by **text**, our **toll-free number** or, at our events or in our New Westminster office, face to face. Staff are available Monday to Friday from 9:30-5:00. In case of urgent, after-hours matters, you can reach Executive Director Jules Wilson at 778.389.9492. While he periodically checks his phone after-hours, in an emergency it's best to call 911 or, if not in immediate harm, the youth crisis line is open all the time and is a friendly, anonymous source of support: phone:1-866-872-0113 or live chat: <http://youthinbc.com/>

Policy Background:

This policy outlines which information is kept confidential and what confidentiality means to FBCYICN staff, adult supports, volunteers and members. FBCYICN staff are not required to have formal counselor training, so we support young people as a team.



BY COMING TOGETHER. WE'RE NOT ALONE!
www.fbcyicn.ca

Confidentiality

All information shared to a team member by a youth member is confidential amongst the staff team unless the team member has a reason to believe that youth member has been, or is likely to be, physically or sexually harmed including significant self-harm (where there is risk of loss of life or serious injury) or harm to others.

Supporting Young People as a Team

All information young people share with a team member in person, through Facebook, text or over the phone will also be shared with the entire staff team in a respectful and safe way. Any information shared with youth staff, adult volunteers, and youth volunteers will be shared with the staff team also. In this case youth staff are not considered part of the “staff team” because we recognize the potential for blurry lines between youth staff and their peers. Sharing personal information about other team members may put youth staff and the young person who is sharing in an awkward situation.

Reasons we support young people as a team are:

- To ensure healthy support and boundaries between staff and young people. This includes: No “secrets;” this ensures the staff are not spending too much time supporting one young person, and that there are support plans in place.
- Young people and staff know that they can use the expertise and experience from the entire team.
- It takes the pressure off the team member to be the “one and only” for that young person.
- Young people feel better supported on the needs and issues they are working on.
- Helps in figuring out consistent ways we can hold young people accountable.
- Staff team can get help with any problem solving.
- If a staff member is on vacation or no longer working at the organization, then any staff member can assist the young person.
- We can draw on the strengths of a team to provide holistic support to a young person.

Young people can still have a primary relationship with a team member that they feel comfortable with. That team member would be responsible for ensuring that proper support is being given; however, that young person will still be aware that they are getting supported by the team.

Permission

In certain situations staff may feel that it would be beneficial to the support they are providing young people to share information that was given by that young person with others. For example, it may be beneficial to the young person for a staff member to talk with their other support people (i.e. caregiver, social worker, counselor) to gather

information to better support that young person or to help those individuals with the support they are providing that young person. Staff members must ask the young person for their permission before revealing any information that young person has shared; this includes social workers or youth workers. When talking with a young person's counselor, doctor or psychologist, that young person most likely will have to sign a consent form provided by those professionals before any information is discussed. If young people bring up a concern about another individual and follow up needs to happen, as long as the young person sharing the information will not be mentioned, that staff member does not need to ask them for permission.

Legal Duty to Report

The following information outlines a BC law to which FBCYICN must comply:

Anyone who thinks that a child has been or is likely to be physically harmed, sexually abused or exploited, or neglected *must report* the matter to a child protection social worker. This is a legal responsibility and helps ensure that all members of the community are looking out for children. In British Columbia, a child is anyone under the age of 19. The duty to report applies to everyone, including service providers, family members and the general public – in short, anyone who is aware of circumstances that should be reported.

Sometimes the need to report a situation is very clear; however, many serious incidents go unreported because they are less obvious. Make sure that no child remains in an unhealthy environment. You **MUST** report a situation:

- Even if you believe someone else is reporting the same situation.
- Even if you're aware that a child protection social worker is already involved with the child. This may be a new incident.
- Even if you are afraid of breaking confidentiality – the safety of a child is more important. You are legally required to report all incidents except within a solicitor-client relationship (i.e. lawyer and client).
- Right away! Time is of the essence in ensuring the safety and well-being of children.
- By contacting a child protection social worker or the police. Do not contact the alleged perpetrator.

Here are examples of some less obvious situations that need to be reported:

- If a child is emotionally harmed by a parent or care giver's conduct;
- If a child is deprived of necessary health care;
- If a child's development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child's parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment;
- If a child's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care;
- If a child is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child's safety or well-being;
- If a child's parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care; and



BY COMING TOGETHER. WE'RE NOT ALONE!
www.fbcyicn.ca

- If a child has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care.

You don't have to report when it is clear that an injury or other harm is accidental and is a result of circumstances outside the control of the parent or other person responsible for the child in, for example, a playground injury.

For members who are over 19 we have a legal duty to report illegal activity that we hear. If a person is a harm to themselves or others we would still contact the appropriate authorities to ensure peoples safety.

How to report Child Abuse or Neglect?

There are a few different ways to report child abuse and/or neglect:

- If a child is in immediate danger, call the police right away! Just dial 911 and ask for police assistance.
- Call the Children's HELPLINE: 310-1234 (no area code needed). It doesn't cost anything to call, and a child protection social worker is always there to listen and help, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Report to a child protection social worker in either a Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) office, or an Aboriginal Delegated Agency that provides child protection services (listed in the blue pages of your phone book).
- Call an MCFD After Hours Line if it is past regular business hours:
- Vancouver, North Shore, Richmond: 604-660-4927
- Lower Mainland (Burnaby and Delta in the west to Maple Ridge and Langley in the east): 604-660-8180
- Anywhere else in B.C.: 1-800-663-9122.

Record all the details you have about the situation you are reporting, but don't delay. Although having as much information as possible is important, it's more important to make a report right away. In most circumstances, the identity of the person who makes a report will not be revealed without consent, unless the child protection social worker is required to give their name for the purposes of a court hearing.

Communicating this Policy to Members

It is important that young people are fully aware and understand our confidentiality policy before they share information with us. When supporting a young person for the first time, staff ask if they know, understand, or have any questions about our confidentiality policy. Young people we are supporting should understand these points:

1. We support young people as a team; this means all information they share is only shared with the staff team unless we have a legal duty to report.
2. We have a legal duty to report if we hear information around someone being harmed or is harming themselves or others and/or if we have reason to believe someone under the age of 19 is being neglected.



BY COMING TOGETHER. WE'RE NOT ALONE!
www.fbcyicn.ca

If a young person is about to disclose information that we have a legal duty to report, it's really important to try and tell them before they disclose what information you may have to report. If a young person discloses before we have told them about our policy and legal duties, then staff must inform the young person we will have to report this information and explain the process and reasons why we have to report.