



# YOUTH UNIT

## WELCOME

This handbook will provide you with some information about the Youth Unit at Ledger House. As we work with you to build a program that is beneficial to your needs, feel free to ask a lot of questions (*honest—you won't be bugging us!*). Youth come here for a lot of different reasons and we treat every person as an individual.

The mandate of our program is to provide inpatient care and support to youth and their families in a hospital setting. The focus is on stabilization, assessment, treatment readiness and specific treatment goals.

The Ledger Program is a 'Trauma Informed Environment' and our services recognize the importance of establishing trusting and safe relationships, joining together with our clients and their families and offering choice wherever possible. We work to create a respectful environment that is open, inquisi-

tive and focused on working collaboratively with the youth, family and community.

This means that every person's program is different, but there are some things that are important for everyone to know.

At Ledger, we strive for ***safety for all***. This includes youth, children, staff, parents and visitors. We want people who come here to feel physically, emotionally and socially safe. We believe that when you come here, you become part of the Ledger community, which means you play an important part in creating a safe environment.

***We are always here to listen.***



## HONORING DIVERSITY

At Ledger House, we strive to treat others with:

- Understanding and trust
- Respect and Understanding
- Openness
- Support (not putting others down, cheering them on)
- Honor and respect for all cultures, religions and beliefs of others
- Empathy (trying to see things from another person's point of view)



## YOUR STAY

Everyone has better days and days that *could be have been* better. Everyone's feelings, thoughts and behaviors affect the way their day goes. Often, these effects are positive and make life work for you and those around you. Other times, the effects are not very helpful - maybe even a hassle.

Most of the time, most days should be reasonable and low stress. When things are stressful, too often it is tiring and becomes hard to focus and enjoy life. Sometimes it might even be hard to feel safe. If you are here, it is because either you or someone who cares about you may be wondering if things have been too much too often lately.

The Youth Unit Team believes that everyone deserves to feel happy and successful most of the time and will help you figure out what things may get in the way and help you explore coping strategies.

Everyone deserves to have a voice or a say as long as it's *safe*.

## HOW LONG WILL I STAY?

Admissions to the Youth Unit are voluntary (unless you are certified under the Mental Health Act) and the average length of stay is approximately 5 weeks.

We will regularly review how things are going with you and meet with your family and/or guardian as well as any community workers you may have to review your progress and plan for a discharge.



## WHAT ABOUT PASSES OR VISITORS?

Youth often go home on weekends because we encourage family connections throughout admission. This will allow you and your family to work on not only your personal goals, but your goals as a family as well. Prior to a pass, staff will work on pass planning with you and your parent/guardian and then meet with you again upon your arrival back to the unit to discuss how it went. There will be opportunities for you to go out into the community, as well as have family visitors come here.

Family visitors travelling to Victoria from out of town can stay at Jeneece Place—a home away from home for families with children in care. Visit [jeneeceplace.org](http://jeneeceplace.org) or call 250-479-9908 for more information. Family members can visit you on the unit, we just ask that you arrange this ahead of time with your counsellor—just so we're not interfering with group time. You will have time to visit with friends while on pass.



### WHAT CAN I DO

#### THERE?

- One-to-one time with your counsellor
- School
- Groups (drumming, pottery and gym activities)
- Games (cards or board games)
- Games room (pool table, ping pong, video games)
- Bike rides, walks, swimming, basketball or hockey
- Outings (group or one-on-one with your counsellor)
- Reading or movies
- Arts & Crafts

## WHAT CAN I BRING

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You can bring a few things from home that will help you feel comfortable on the unit such as blankets, music, and pictures to decorate your room.

Movies from outside Ledger are not permitted, but we have a huge DVD library you can use! Expensive or personally important items might be better left at home as we will not be able to replace the item if it gets broken or misplaced. We do not permit laptops or tablets but you can use school computers after checking with school staff.

We do not have internet access on the units but we can sometimes arrange to go the library so that you can check your email and connect with family and friends (or you can do this on pass too!)

We have a public phone available for use on the units but we do not permit cell phones here. Please do not bring any electronic device that have internet access, texting capabilities or cameras (this includes disabled devices) as we strive to protect everyone's right to privacy. We recommend bringing in an MP3 player or an iPod (without the camera) with your favorite music.

Our grounds are beautiful place to walk but we would like to remind you that our building and grounds are non-smoking in compliance with the



## DAILY SCHEDULE

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*Each morning, a daily schedule will be posted on the unit. It will tell you what is planned for the day (i.e., school times, community meeting times, free time, outings etc...)*

### **Wake Up and Bed Times**

Most youth will receive a wake up call during the week between 8 and 8:30am and to be ready for breakfast by 9:30am or 10 at the latest. On weekends, wake up calls usually start at 10am. Bedtimes are at 10pm on weeknights and 10:30pm on weekends and holidays. You will need to be in your room at bedtime and can read or engage in a quiet activity in your room after that time.

### **School**

We have a small school with a qualified teacher who will help keep you on track with school work. The school is closed for the month of August

### **Meals/Snacks**

Lunch is at 12pm and dinner is at 5pm. Access to healthy snacks are always available (i.e., fruit, water, yogurt). Treats from home are kept in the office and are available at 2:30pm and 8pm.

### **Electronic Time**

Limited to up to one hour per shift (not overnight shift). This includes the Wii room. The use of hand-held games needs to be discussed with your worker.

## COMMUNITY MEETING

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At least once a day, we will have a Community Meeting with youth and staff to check in and give people the chance to talk about safety. You can also talk one-on-one with a counsellor at any time.

Keeping everyone feeling safe means that there are some rules. Your counselor will be happy to go over these and answer any questions you many have.

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# MEET THE TEAM

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## **Child & Youth Counsellors**

Counsellors are available and the units and will work closely with you through your stay. They will work with you to help you set your own goals and plan your day to day program.

## **Dietician**

Our dietician can meet with you or parents to discuss questions related to healthy eating, medication effects on diet or other specific needs or concerns. She may also run educational groups with youth.

## **Nurses**

Our nurses will provide any health care follow up and monitoring of medications that you may need. They are also available to talk to about any health questions or concerns you may have.

## **Occupational Therapist**

An OT can help you improve functioning in everyday activities (i.e. life/living skills, stress, anxiety and sleep management). The OT also runs groups like drumming, pottery and gym activities.

## **Parents/Caregivers/Guardians & Siblings**

They may be involved with you and your admission and may have input into developing plans to help support you.

## **Peers**

Sharing ideas with your peers is an important part of group activity planning and problem-solving.

## **Psychiatrist (MD)**

A psychiatrist is a doctor who has special training in mental health. Each youth who comes to Ledger has a psychiatrist who is in charge of their care. The psychiatrist will meet with you and your family to discuss your needs and to help you plan your goals while in the Youth Unit. They will also work with other members of the team to help you feel better. Sometimes, the psychiatrist will prescribe medicine if you and your parents/caregivers agree that it might be helpful.

## **Registered Psychologist**

The psychologist will work with you to figure out where your thoughts, feelings and behaviors come from, and how they affect your self-esteem, relationships, education, creativity and other things that may be important to you. This is a key step in figuring out how to feel better and to live your life more the way you want it to be. The psychologist also has some special ways of helping you find out how your own mind works too, like how you learn, think, remember and pay attention to things.

## **Teacher & Education Assistant**

Ledger has a small school to help you continue your education while here. Our teacher and education assistant are able to provide a lot of individual attention and, with your permission, will talk with your community school to plan for your return.

## **Social Worker**

The social worker is here to talk with you and the people significant to you about your concerns or issues. She may provide individual and/or family therapy. She can also help to connect you with community resources to support you when you leave the unit.

## **Speech Language Pathologist**

The SLP will work with you to figure out your communication strengths and struggles, your self esteem, education and self expression. The SLP can help you be as successful as you choose when learning, playing and socializing with others.

## **You**

The most important player on the team. You will work with staff to help guide your program.

*We look forward to getting to know you and building a program together that is beneficial to you. Our goal is to be open, respectful and supportive - so please feel free to ask a lot of questions!*

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*Heretohelp.bc.ca provides families and professionals with information, tools and tips on how to support and assist youth and families with mental health difficulties*



*We would like to thank the Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island for their generous support for the Ledger House Inpatient Programs*