



## Youth Mental Health Court Worker Program of the Youth Therapeutic Court (YTC)

### What is Youth Therapeutic Court?

The primary goal of YTC is to identify the mental health needs of youth involved in the justice system in a timely manner in order to facilitate improved access to community based mental health care and to work with youth, family members, care providers, Defense/Duty Counsel and the Crown Attorney to develop a treatment plan. This service is available to youth in London/Middlesex County who have been charged with an offence under the Youth Criminal Justice Act (charged before the age of 18) and have a diagnosed or suspected mental illness, traumatic brain injury or developmental disability. Where appropriate, we support diversion of youth with mental illness out of the formal justice system.

The Youth Mental Health Court Worker (YMHCW) is available as a resource to the Court for youth and their family members involved within YTC as well as care providers, staff in the Crown Attorney's office and defense/duty counsel.

This service is free of charge to our clients and is funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

### How Can I Access Services?

Referrals can be made at any stage of the court process by a young person, a family member, care providers, community agencies, defense/duty counsel or the Crown Attorney's office. Referral forms are available from the office of the Crown Attorney or the YTC team.

### What is the Process?

The type of services offered will vary depending on the individual needs of the youth as follows:

- Youth referred to the service in London/Middlesex will meet with a YTC clinician for an initial screening interview. Input will also be garnered from family members and care providers.
- Youth requiring support for their mental health needs will be offered an extensive evaluation that can include development of a treatment/diversion plan if diversion is granted.
- For youth already linked to community services, the YMHCW will actively develop connections so that information is shared, treatment plans are collaborative and so that there is continuity of service.

- If it is determined through the assessment process that counselling would be a beneficial support, a referral will be made to a YTC-Multidisciplinary Clinical Supports Program Counsellor as part of the YTC Team.
- In cases where diversion out of the formal justice system is appropriate, and if the youth agrees, a formal request for mental health diversion is made to the Crown Attorney's office. The request would include a treatment plan for which the young person is asked to agree as a condition of diversion.
- If the Crown Attorney accepts a youth for diversion, then the YMHCW will provide outreach services to monitor their progress for a period of one year. Upon successful completion of the one year diversion plan, the charges will be stayed (dropped).
- For youth not linked to a community agency, the YMHCW will provide short-term intensive case management services in order to stabilize youth in crisis.
- In cases where diversion is not the best option, the young person still has the opportunity to be linked to community-based mental health services and have the court matter resolved with a more therapeutic approach.
- When the needs of a youth and the family are complex, a longer assessment is required. In these cases, youth will be referred to the London Family Court Clinic for a Section 34 Assessment.

Some important points:

- involvement in the service is voluntary
- youth will have the opportunity to consent at every stage of the process
- there is no fee for the service
- this service is open to the residents of London and Middlesex County

