

## *Eligibility & Referrals*

The Youth Therapeutic Court Service was established in order to identify and support the mental health needs of youth in the justice system. It is open to youth under the age of 18, charged with a criminal offence under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and with a diagnosed or suspected serious mental illness, traumatic brain injury, or developmental disability.

Referrals to the clinician can be made at any stage of the court process by a youth, a family member, family care providers, community agencies, defense/duty counsel or the Crown Attorney.

The type of services offered will vary depending on the individual needs of the youth with input from family members and care providers.

## *How We Help*

The primary goal of the service is to identify the mental health needs of youth involved in the justice system in a timely manner. We will then be able to facilitate improved access to community-based health care and work with youth, family, care providers, defense/duty counsel and the Crown Attorney to develop a treatment plan. When appropriate, we will support a plan of diversion out of the formal justice system for the youth involved.

## **What to Expect From Youth Therapeutic Court:**

- Youth referred to the service will meet with the Youth Therapeutic Court Clinician (a registered social worker with expertise in mental health) for an initial screening interview.
- Youth requiring support for their therapeutic needs will be offered a more extensive evaluation that will include development of a treatment/diversion plan.
- For youth already linked to community services, the Youth Therapeutic Court Clinician will actively develop connections so that treatment plans are collaborative.
- In those cases where diversion out of the formal justice system is appropriate and if the youth is agreeable, a formal request for diversion will be made to the Crown Attorney. The request will include the treatment plan and the youth will be asked to agree to the plan as a condition of diversion.
- If the Crown Attorney accepts a youth for diversion, then the Youth Therapeutic Court Clinician will facilitate a link to outreach services to monitor the youth's progress for a period of one year. Upon successful completion of the one year diversion plan, the charges will be stayed (dropped).

## **Other Ways We Help:**

- For youth not linked to a community agency, the Youth Therapeutic Court Clinician will provide short-term intensive case management services in order to stabilize youth in crisis.
- In cases where diversion is not the best option, youth will still have the opportunity to be linked to community-based therapeutic services.
- There will be situations where the needs of a youth and their family are complex and a more formalized assessment is required. In those cases, a court-ordered (Section 34) assessment may be recommended and could be completed at the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System.
- The Youth Therapeutic Court Clinician is available as a resource to the court for youth involved in the justice system, their family members and care providers, the Crown Attorney, and defense/duty counsel.

## **What's Unique About Youth Therapeutic Court?**

**Involvement in the service is voluntary**

**Youth will have the opportunity to consent at every stage of the process**

**The service is open to residents of London and Middlesex County**

**There is no fee for the service**

## Facts About Youth and Justice

- It is estimated that one in five youth has a diagnosable mental illness.
- Females are more likely than males to have an anxiety and mood disorder.
- Youth in the justice system experience substantially higher rates of mental illness than youth in the general population.
- Anxiety and mood disorders often co-occur with disruptive behaviour disorders and substance use disorders.
- Youth in the justice system often present with other risk factors including trauma, abuse, teen pregnancy, precocious exit from home, and early school leaving.

Source: Skowrya & Cocozza (2006). *Blueprint for Change: A Comprehensive Model for the Identification and Treatment of Youth with Mental Health Needs in Contact with the Juvenile Justice System*. National Centre for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.

### How to reach us:

For more information contact:  
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Les services sont disponibles en  
français sur demande.

# Youth Therapeutic Court

## Supporting the Therapeutic Needs of Youth in the Justice System



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The Centre promotes emotional health, healing and growth in children, youth and families involved in the legal system, to help them through a difficult time in their lives.

Our approach to helping is to:

- Listen with respect and without judgment
- Understand people as having challenges and opportunities rather than problems
- Acknowledge family preferences and needs to individualize the service
- Recognize the achievements and nurture the potential of children, youth, and families
- Work collaboratively with sister agencies on behalf of families
- Create workable, solution-focused plans that keep everyone safe
- Maintain the highest standards of professional practice



For more information on the Centre,  
visit our website:  
[www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)

