
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

Ongoing support, services benefit adults with mental-health issues

NANAIMO – Adults living with mental-health challenges will continue to have access to low- or no-cost counselling services to help them get well.

“When someone takes the courageous step of reaching out for mental-health support, services must be there for them,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “Over the past six years, thousands of people across B.C. have received low- and no-cost counselling, many for the very first time. With this investment, we’re ensuring that people can continue to find affordable, life-changing mental-health care when they need it most.”

Since the Province launched low- and no-cost counselling services in 2019, organizations have provided more than 362,000 counselling sessions, with 72,000 people accessing counselling for the first time.

Government is investing \$6.7 million to continue providing free or low-cost adult mental-health or addictions counselling services. Forty-four community-based organizations in all health authorities in the province, including urban, rural and Indigenous communities, will receive funding to provide supports.

The Community Action Initiative (CAI), which is a non-profit organization that provides grant and training opportunities for organizations across B.C., administers the funding through the Community Counselling Fund. Since 2019, the Province has invested more than \$43 million in counselling capacity in communities. The most common needs this year have been trauma, grief and loss, isolation, and economic hardship.

“The Community Action Initiative has been proud to partner with the Province of B.C. to provide grants and capacity building for non-profit organizations that provide counselling services,” said Julia Kaisla, executive director, CAI. “As a result, community members from all across the province have gained new skills and supports to move forward in their lives, and in their healing. This has undoubtedly reduced the burden on our health-care system and has enhanced community health and capacity.”

Community counselling provides flexibility for counsellors to meet clients through outreach, in-person counselling or through virtual supports. In some community agencies, counsellors connect people to other services and supports, such as housing, employment insurance, addictions treatment or attending appointments with them.

Providing counselling services is one part of government’s work to build a full continuum of mental-health and addictions care that works for everyone. In addition, the Province continues to add and expand care, including early intervention and prevention, treatment and recovery services, supportive and complex-care housing and more.

Quotes:**Sheila Malcolmson, MLA for Nanaimo-Gabriola Island –**

“There's strength in diversity, so we're offering a range of mental-health counselling. To meet people where they are, today we're investing in community counselling services in Nanaimo and across B.C. Counsellors will also connect a person to vital housing, employment and addiction treatment to support mental health.”

Chief Mike Wyse, Snuneymuxw First Nation –

“We are thankful for our partnership with the Province and the Community Action Initiative, which helps us sustain safe and relevant community mental-health supports that honour our ways of healing.”

Learn More:

For more information about CAI, visit: <https://caibc.ca>

Learn more about mental-health and substance-use supports in B.C.:
<https://gov.bc.ca/BetterCare>

Two backgrounders follow.

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