



CHILD, YOUTH & FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
INPATIENT PROGRAM AT LEDGER HOUSE

Youth Unit

Welcome

This handbook will provide you with some information about the Youth Unit at Ledger House, and the things that we have to offer. As we work with you to build a program that is beneficial to your needs, feel free to ask a lot of questions. 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.” 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, inquisitive and focused on working collaboratively with the child, 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 a part of the Ledger community, which means you play an important part in creating a safe environment.
- We value your safety. Please read the Vancouver Island Health brochure *Simple Steps for a Safe Hospital Stay*, included in your welcome package.

We are always here to listen.

Honoring Diversity

At Ledger House we strive to treat others with:

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



A Resource for Families

The FORCE Society provides families and professionals with information, tools, and tips on how to support and assist children with *mental health* difficulties.

Telephone: 604-878-3400

Email: theforce@forcesociety.com

Web: www.forcesociety.com

F.O.R.C.E Society for Kids' Mental Health
'As families, we've been there'



www.forcesociety.com

Your Stay

Everyone has better days, and days that *could 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 hassle. When things are a hassle too often it is tiring and becomes hard to focus and enjoy life. Sometimes it may 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 become a hassle too often lately.

- The Youth Unit believes that everyone deserves to feel happy and successful most of the time.
- The Youth Unit will help you figure out what things may get in the way of having more 'low hassle' days.
- Everyone deserves to have a voice, or a say, as long as it is *safe*.
- Youth Unit has a *Team* (see page 4) who want to hear from you.

How Long Will I Stay?

Admissions to the Youth Unit are voluntary (unless you are certified under the Mental Health Act). The average length of stay is three to four weeks.

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

What About Passes or Visitors?

Youth often go home on weekends, although we ask that they stay for at least the first weekend to settle into the program. Leave passes can be for a few hours to an overnight or two. Prior to a pass, staff will work on pass planning with you and your parent/guardian, and then upon return will meet with you again to discuss how it went. Talk to your counselor ahead of time to set it up. There are opportunities for you to go out into the community, as well as have visitors come here. Before and after you go out on a pass, you and your parent/guardian will need to meet with staff to prepare for and to review the pass.

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 or call 250-479-9908 for more information. If your friends wish to visit, these visits must be off the unit to protect the confidentiality of the other youth in the program. The visits will be supervised by staff and must be arranged ahead of time.



What Can I Do There?

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

What Can I Bring?

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. 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 laptop computers or iPads, but you can use school and unit computers after checking with

staff (see e-time). We do not have Internet access on the units but we can sometimes arrange to go to the public library so that you can check your email (or this can be done while on pass).

You are welcome to use the Ledger phone. If you are from out of town, bringing a prepaid long distance card is a good idea.

Cell phones are not permitted at Ledger. Please **do not** bring any electronic devices that have Internet, texting or camera

capacity. Our grounds are a beautiful place to walk but we would like to remind you that our building and grounds are all **non-smoking**.

Daily Schedule

Each morning a daily schedule will be posted on the unit. It will tell you what is planned for that day (eg: school times, community meeting times, free time, evening groups, and outings).

Wake-up/Bedtimes:

Most youth will receive a wake-up call during the week at 8-8:30 am, to be ready for breakfast by 8:30 am at the latest. On weekends, wake-up calls are usually at 9:30 am.

Bedtimes are 10 pm on weekdays and 10:30 pm on weekends. 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.

Meals/Snacks:

Lunch is at 12 noon and dinner is at 5 pm. Access to healthy snacks are always available (eg: fruit, water, yoghurt). Treats from home are kept in the office and are available at 3 pm.



Electronic Time (E-time):

E-time is limited to one hour per shift (but not at night). This includes the Wii room as well as the unit computer. The use of hand-held games and MP3's needs to be discussed with your worker.

TV Time:

Check with your worker to ask if you can watch TV. The TV is not available Mon-Thurs, 9 am-3 pm (not including holidays). TV programs must be suitable to all ages.

Community Meeting

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 counselor 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 may have.

Meet The Team

Your team is made up of:

Child & Youth Counselors:

Counselors are available on the unit and will work closely with you throughout your stay. They will work with you to help you set your own goals and plan your day-to-day program.



Dietitian: Our dietician can meet with youth 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 the 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 his or her 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. She will also work with the other members of the team to help you feel better. Sometimes the psychiatrist will prescribe medicine if you and your parents and/or 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, like how you learn, think, remember and pay attention to things.

School Teacher & Teacher's Assistant: Ledger has a small school to help you continue your education while here. Our teacher and teacher 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, and how your speech, language and social skills affect your self esteem, education and self expression. The SLP can help you be as successful as you choose when learning, playing and interacting with others.

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

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

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

The direct phone line to the Youth Unit is **250-519-6725**.

We are located in the Ledger building on the beautiful grounds of the Queen Alexandra Center for Children's Health in Victoria (2400 Arbutus Road). For a map to the site, visit:

www.viha.ca/finding_care/facilities/queen_alexandra_centre_childrens_health.htm