



Special Care Unit

Welcome

This handbook will provide you with information about the Special Care Unit at Ledger House and what we have to offer. Feel free to ask a lot of questions. Our staff will be happy to answer as best they can.

The mandate of the Special Care team is to provide short-term stabilization and assessment to children and youth during an acute crisis. Like the rest of our inpatient programs, Special Care provides individually-based care that is focused on safety and your individual needs. You and your family will be involved in the development of your care plan and it will be based on your unique situation and needs.

The Special Care Unit is smaller, quieter, and less busy than the rest of Ledger House. There are

only two children or youth here at one time, and there will always be a nurse and a child/youth counselor working with you on the unit.

Special Care looks different and may feel different than most places you have been. It is *pretty plain* and is built to be very safe.

Soon after you arrive we will ask you to tell us what makes you feel *safe*. Our staff are here to listen. Your personal belongings will then be checked with you and your family. Everything you keep here will be kept safely for you.

We are always here to listen.

If you have any concerns about your care or our services, please contact the Program Coordinator at (250) 519-6716.

Honoring Diversity

In the Special Care Unit we strive to treat others with:

- Understanding and trust
- Respect and courtesy
- Openness
- Honour and respect for all cultures, religions and beliefs of others
- Empathy (trying to see things from another person's point of view)
- Support (not putting others down, cheering them on)
- A sense of togetherness (in creating a safe community)



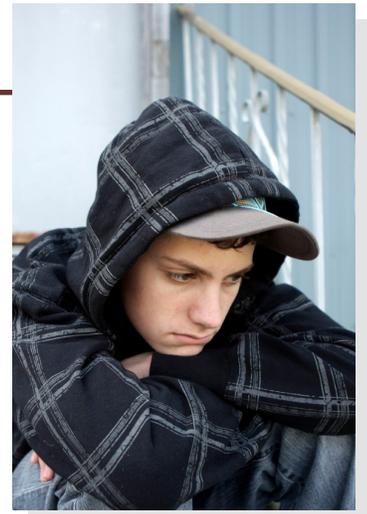
How We Can Help

The Special Care team knows a lot about crisis. They know that crisis is almost always very confusing and often comes with big feelings. These big feelings may include worries about yourself, your own safety or the safety of others you care about.

We value your safety. Please read the Vancouver Island Health brochures on *safety* that are included in your welcome package.

The team has a lot of ideas about how to make things feel calmer and safer for you and your family. There is always someone you can talk to on the unit.

The Special Care team also knows how to have fun and they will be happy to hear some of your ideas about what you like to do.



How Long Will I Stay?

Most children and youth are admitted to the Special Care Unit on a voluntary basis and some are certified under the Mental Health Act. If you are certified, we will explain your rights to you and the certification will be reviewed regularly. If you are unsure about this, ask us and we will talk about it with you.

Children and youth stay in Special Care for different reasons and for different lengths of time. Generally, admissions to the unit are shorter in length than admissions to the other programs at Ledger House. This is because Special Care is where kids come to recover from a crisis. Our goal is to get you home and back to your life as soon as possible.

The Special Care team will talk with you and your family about how things are going. As the crisis settles, and things stay safe, a plan to leave Special Care will be made with you and your family (and maybe community supports, such as counselors). The details of this plan will be discussed and decided with you.

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



What Can I Do There?

In Special Care, all activities are focused on safety and getting you better, and back home, as soon as possible. Sometimes, activities have to take place on the unit. As soon as it feels safe, we will plan to make use of the activities in the building and on the grounds. There are many different opportunities for several types of entertainment, arts, crafts, exercise and sports available. It is always appropriate to ask what things we can do.

Some activities we can do include:

- Playground
- Gym (including all types of sports equipment)
- Climbing wall
- Beach visits (on site)
- Arts and crafts
- Games
- Wii gaming system
- TV and movies (all shows appropriate to age and supportive of recovery)

What Can I Bring?

You are welcome to bring things from home such as personal comforters, bedding, some pictures and stuffies. Some home-cooked meals or treats from your parents are often welcomed.

When you get here we will look through your things together, and you can ask questions about any items that you are wondering about.

Valuables and breakables are best left at home as we can not replace them if they get broken or

misplaced. If you bring music, it can only be used at certain times.

We do not permit laptop computers, but you can use a school or unit computer after checking with staff. We do not have internet access at Ledger.

Cell phones are not permitted at Ledger. We also ask that you **do not** bring electronic devices that have internet access, texting capacity or cameras.

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



Daily Schedule

When you wake up, there will be an opportunity to talk with your counselor and/or nurse, to discuss ideas and plan your day. Safety and your care plan are an important part of planning each day.

Sleep hygiene is a big part of having settled days and a faster recovery - so we think about it a lot. This may help us decide about wake-up times and bedtimes. The goal is to get a good night's sleep whenever possible. Your ideas are always welcome.



Visitors and Passes

We want you to have all the support and care that family and friends can offer. We support safe, planned calls and visits from family and friends. Your care plan may suggest ideas about when and how these visits happen at first. You will be part of this planning.

Visitors are asked to **plan their visits with you and staff** to avoid confusion or missed appointments.

Passes (time out of the building) may be planned with you, your family, and the Special Care team as we get to know you. Passes will consider safety and your care plan to make sure you get better as fast as possible. Please allow time to meet with staff before and after passes.

Meals and Snacks

We support healthy eating habits as part of good health.

Lunch is at noon and dinner is at 5pm. Access to healthy snacks (eg: fruit, water, yoghurt) is always available. Treats (junk food) are kept in the office and are available at 3pm, although sugar is not recommended.



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 any other specific needs or concerns.

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 such as life and living skills, stress, anxiety and sleep management. The OT also runs groups like drumming, pottery and yoga.

Parents/Caregivers/Guardians & Siblings: They may be involved with you and your admission and may have input into developing plans to help support you.

Psychiatrist (MD): A psychiatrist is a doctor who has special training in mental health. Every person 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. 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/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 such as how you learn, think, remember or 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 identify 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 figure out how to 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 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 Special Care Unit is **250-519-6727**.

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