



Family Services

Georgia Strait
WOMENS CLINIC



Why Georgia Strait Women's Clinic?

We are an advanced health facility that gives working women an opportunity to explore their problem drinking or drug use while also building camaraderie with others experiencing similar issues. This shared experience has been shown to provide the most therapeutic value.

Family Services

Improving relationships among family members and partners corresponds with more successful treatment outcomes. We help family members and close friends better understand what addiction is and its impact on relationships, the challenges involved in overcoming those relationship issues, and what they can do after treatment to provide helpful support to their loved one.

We understand the critical role relationships have in successful treatment outcomes. Family members (romantic partners, parents, siblings, and children) and friends are part of the solution. Family Services is designed not only to help our clients currently in treatment; its main goal is to help family members and friends find their own peace.



Family Services helps the loved ones of our clients (1) understand the nature of addictions, (2) learn new ways to cope, and (3) prepare themselves for their loved one's return home following treatment. The popular media's descriptions of addictions are often simplistic, providing little useful information for families. In our program, families and friends discover a more scientifically accurate and useful way to understand addictions. As important as it is to understand the nature of addiction, however, the program's real focus is to help family members and friends find more successful ways to cope. Typically, they focus on their loved ones, devising all sorts of ways to control them. These efforts, however, rarely help.

Most participants come into Family Services wondering how they can best support their loved ones. Most finish with the realization that the best support they can provide is to help themselves and help their loved ones assume responsibility for their lives. Family members and friends have their own healing journeys, and their loved ones have another. As adults, we are the authors of our lives.

Program Overview

Family Weekend Workshops

The Family Weekends are primarily educational rather than therapeutic. The code of ethics for counsellors is quite clear: Don't bring up anything you can't resolve before you finish. Most family issues are very complex and it would be unethical to pretend we could help solve them in two days.

Families can attend the family weekend while their loved one is in treatment with us or anytime afterwards. There is no expiry date on family members attending this program. These weekends are held in Powell River, but also in Calgary*, Edmonton*, or Vancouver* on a rotating basis.

Please see the Family Weekend Activity Schedule for an overview of the Family Weekend's schedule. To register, complete our online Family Weekend registration form, call 1.866.487.9050 ext. 205, or e-mail familyweekend@schc.ca.

**Maximum of three family members per client/alumna. This program is not available to clients or our alumni. Please be aware that Family Weekends in all locations are currently on hiatus due to COVID-19.*

Online Support

We encourage loved ones to participate in our online support program. For those who are unable to attend the Family Weekend or would like to review the information provided, a 10-part email series with videos is available at a family member's request. The series follows the content of the Family Weekend.

We find that loved ones who participate in these programs have a significant advantage over those who do not. When the family dynamic at home is changed, clients are better equipped for the challenge of maintaining positive change achieved during treatment.



Participation in the Family Weekend

We feel your participation in the Family Weekend is so important that we include it in your loved one's treatment fee. Pending available space and pre-registration, members of the general public are also welcome to attend.

Travel expenses such as plane and ferry fares, fuel, and accommodation are the responsibility of participants. Continental breakfast and lunch are included. Participants are responsible for making their own dinner arrangements.

Location

Travelling to Powell River? Visit the Getting Here section of our website for air and car travel directions, accommodation, and car rentals.

Childcare During the Family Weekend

We do not provide childcare to participants with children. If you would like assistance in securing childcare, our Family Weekend coordinators can help. Email familyweekend@schc.ca.



Contact Guidelines for Family Members and Friends

We encourage a “go-slow” approach when family members and friends are discussing potentially upsetting topics with clients, particularly during the first week following their loved one's admission into treatment.

Please do not hesitate to contact Carissa at 1.866.487.9050 ext. 206 or email carissam@schc.ca if you have any questions.

Please note that we are legally bound to safeguard information about clients during their treatment stays. Unless clients sign an Authorization to Communicate with a specific individual, staff can neither confirm nor deny their presence. Clients may revoke the Authorization to Communicate at any time. Remember: clients are in control of their personal information. This means that staff may be free to converse with you one day but not free to do so the next.

In the event of an atypical discharge—a client leaving Against Staff Advice (ASA) or At Staff Request (ASR)—a client's emergency contact and the person who paid for their treatment (“Funder”) is promptly notified.

How You Can Help

Entering treatment can be a great opportunity to undergo significant positive change. Change, however, often evokes powerful negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety. People with addictions may fluctuate in their commitment toward recovery. Family members and friends need to understand that individuals in recovery may also undergo a grieving period as they say goodbye to drugs, alcohol, or other types of addiction (e.g. gambling).

There may be times when people in treatment experience incredible hope for the future and there may be other times when they want to leave treatment. Family members and friends need to keep in mind that assisting in loved ones' desires to "pull the pin" can be counterproductive, especially when what they are thinking is usually a natural part of early recovery.



Mail, Packages, Gifts, & Correspondence with Loved Ones

1. You may send letters or packages. Mailed items that contravene our policies must be left with staff and are returned at the end of your loved one's stay. Any prohibited items you bring for a loved one during a visit are returned to you at the end of your visit.
2. All client packages need to be opened in the presence of a staff member.
3. Clients have onsite WiFi access if you wish to communicate with them by mobile phone, Skype, Zoom, texts, or emails.

Visiting*

Visitation hours are scheduled on Sundays and holidays, from 12-5 PM. Please allow your loved one sufficient opportunity to transition into the program and peer group before arranging a visit. Visits outside these hours are also available, pending staff approval. All visitors must check in with the Client Services department or the medical unit upon arrival.

Family Weekend participants must sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon arrival at the Powell River campus.

**Please note visiting is currently not permitted due to COVID-19.*



About Carissa

YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS LIAISON

As the Family & Friends Liaison Worker, my primary concern is the wellbeing of the friends and family members of our clients. While it may be tempting to just focus on the health of the clients, my colleagues and I understand that no one functions in isolation and we are all influenced by the social support around us. As the family unit moves towards health, everyone benefits.

There are common experiences shared by many of the family members and friends of our clients. It is common to feel unsupported as your loved one receives treatment, while your experiences go unaddressed. We understand the complex dynamics experienced by a family when a loved one is struggling with their mental health. It is our hope that the supports we offer allow you to feel more equipped and understood. As you move towards continuing on your own journey towards mental health, it may also benefit your loved ones.

My experience with Georgia Strait over the years has ranged from being a primary counsellor at the main campus in Powell River to working with the alumni in Calgary. I am a registered psychologist in Alberta and have specialized training in working with addictions. Currently, I am nearing the end of my doctorate of psychology degree and will be soon starting a second doctorate degree at the University of Calgary.

I practice from a psychological perspective that emphasizes the meaning individuals make of their own experiences and how that influences personal reality. While life at times feels out of control, there are always

aspects that are within our ability to control. This means focusing not on controlling our loved ones or aspects of life that are outside our reach but focusing on our abilities and aspects of influence. As you engage with the supports we offer for friends and families, you will be guided towards using your influence in a more productive manner by focusing on your area of control. This includes learning tools to help regulate and process emotions, implementing healthy relationship dynamics, and communicating in a productive manner.

Sincerely,

Carissa Muth, M.A.
Family & Friends Liaison

Testimonials

I have done many kinds of personal development over the years and I would say that the weekend that I spent there was the best (I could have saved myself a lot of money). It was just the boost I needed for this transitional period of my life. I have already started on my goals and I am so excited about the future. No matter what happens with myself and John I know life will be good. Keep doing what you do. There is nothing like helping people to learn to love themselves again! – Sara

Excellent support for family. It is good that the Centre realizes the pain we have been through. – Ken

Yes of course I'm worried about relapse, but it's good to know it can be a part of the process. Also, it's good to connect with others and know we are not alone. – Shelley

Carissa was so awesome, totally relatable & very interesting to listen to. Her examples of stories she had were excellent and on point. Great work & thank you for making us feel so comfortable in a time in our life that is so uncomfortable. – Joy

Georgia Strait

WOMENS CLINIC

1.866.487.9040 // georgiastraitwomensclinic.ca
8104 Highway 101, Powell River, BC V8A 0S1