
Contact Guidelines for Family Members



PHONE CALLS

1. Family members are encouraged to exercise caution when discussing matters with clients that may be upsetting, particularly during the first week following admission when clients are settling into treatment. Please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Family Services **beforehand** if you have any questions.
2. To help ensure our clients' confidentiality, staff members will not provide the phone number for the client phones to outside parties. Clients who wish to receive calls from family and friends are responsible for providing these numbers.
3. Sunshine Coast Health Center is legally bound to safeguard information about a client—including the individual's presence in our program—unless that individual has signed an Authorization to Communicate with a specific party. In the absence of consent, SCHC will neither confirm nor deny the presence of a client in our program. Clients may revoke Authorization to Communicate at any time. *(Remember: For most purposes, the client is in control of information that staff may disclose. This means that staff may be free to converse with you about the client one day, but not free to do so the next.)*
4. In the event of an atypical discharge (a client leaving Sunshine Coast Against Staff Advise or At Staff Request), the Emergency Contact will be notified provided the client has not revoked the Authorization to Communicate.

MAIL

1. You may send letters or packages.
2. All client packages need to be opened in the presence of a staff member.
3. Onsite Internet access (E-mail) is available to clients.
4. Please do not use our Fax number for routine correspondence with clients.

VISITING

1. Visiting is permitted on Sundays and Holidays, from noon to 5:00 PM. It is advisable that the client be allowed sufficient opportunity to transition into the program and peer group before visiting with him. Please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Family Services before booking your travel plans if you have any questions.
2. Visitors must check in at the Reception desk and sign a Confidentiality Agreement before meeting with clients.
3. Any items brought to the Center will need to be searched by a staff member.

How You Can Help (see next page) ►

Contact Guidelines for Family Members

HOW YOU CAN HELP WHILE YOUR LOVED ONE IS IN TREATMENT

Entering treatment can be a time of great opportunity. It can be an occasion for much anxiety. People with addictions may fluctuate in their commitment toward recovery. Many alcoholic or chemically dependent people enter treatment with a secret wish that they will learn how to drink or use drugs without experiencing severe consequences. Such individuals have not come to terms with the fact that they have a potentially life-threatening illness. Furthermore, alcoholic or chemically dependent people will usually go through a

“grieving process” over the loss of their relationship with intoxication or addictive substances. Family members and loved ones need to understand that such grieving—accompanied by bargaining and a roller coaster of emotions—is a normal part of the healing process. There will be times when people in treatment will want to leave; there will be other moments when they experience incredible hope for the future. Loved ones need to keep in mind that a person’s acting on a desire to “pull the pin” may well prove counterproductive—especially if what they are thinking or feeling is a natural part of early recovery.

Helpful Support:

- Understanding people’s fluctuations in commitment to recovery.
- Listen and be supportive without judging.
- Do not panic and make hasty decisions. Give the treatment process time.
- Do not assume that because an individual is not happy in treatment that they are having problems with the style of therapy. This may be part of a natural process of finally accepting the addiction.
- Do not feel like you have to rescue an individual from their own upset feelings during treatment.
- Give an individual time and space to come to terms with their own recovery program.
- Do not try to make an individual feel guilty for being in a recovery program even if they are unable to help out with responsibilities at home.
- Ask the staff if you have any questions about the recovery program.
- Learn about ways to start your own healing process.

Unhelpful Support:

- Joining with the upset individual without understanding the full situation. Remember that you may be hearing only the part of a story the person wants you to know to justify his leaving treatment.
 - Minimizing the addiction problem and accepting that the individual will just get help at home if they want to.
 - Distracting an individual from their recovery process by needing constant attention and assurance of being loved.
 - Demanding answers to past unresolved issues without using the help of a mediator or counsellor.
 - Feeling jealous about the time an individual is spending focusing on recovery. Remember that with a recovery program an individual can become a better person in life. Therefore treatment is an investment for the future.
 - Assuming that an individual in recovery is trying to be someone else or is under some “cultish” influence. There are new words that individuals will learn as part of their recovery that will help them remember to stay away from mood-altering substances. Take the time to learn the recovery language instead of feeling threatened by such changes.
-