

An Overview of Family Services



At Sunshine Coast, addiction is recognized as a condition that impacts not only individuals, but entire families. To reflect our commitment to families and the important role they play for our male clients, Sunshine Coast Health Center has appointed a full-time Director of Family Services that facilitates:

- the Family Program and Couples Day Program
- weekly group sessions with clients that focus on relationships
- additional one on one counselling sessions to family members and clients
- aftercare meetings via conference calls to help families and clients unite around after-care planning
- support for family members and spouses in the event of relapse following treatment

Family Program

The three day Family Program is designed for family members, partners, and close personal friends who have been impacted by the addiction of another person who is now in treatment at Sunshine Coast. This program is of essential benefit to loved ones of people with addictions so that they can learn about the addiction, understand the impact of addiction on their relationships, and focus on how to prepare for life after individuals complete treatment. The atmosphere of the Family Program is a supportive environment whereby family members and partners learn how to begin their journeys of healing. Individuals do not have to share close personal details if they do not want to and they will not be labelled or told that they have a dysfunction themselves. Family Program facilitators provide concrete skills and information that will help group members build on their own existing strengths. The overall tone of the family program is upbeat and positive.

Couples Day

Couples Day was originally created after receiving feedback from clients and their spouses requesting time to work on issues specific to couples such as rebuilding trust and overcoming resentments. These issues are different from concerned parents of adult children in recovery considering that couples usually live together and may have families of their own. Family Program is a prerequisite for couple's day so wives and loved ones in couple's relationships with clients must attend in order to receive basic information about addiction and understanding the fine line between supporting their loved one in recovery and the practice of self-care. Limited to five couples, Couples Day introduces skills and exercises that facilitate rebuilding trust, healing resentments, communication, intimacy, and developing a shared vision of the future as a couple.

Director of Family Services

Cathy Patterson-Sterling - MA, RCC



Since 2006, Cathy has served a number of roles at Sunshine Coast Health Center, including Program Director from 2006 to 2008. Prior to Sunshine Coast, Cathy served 7 years as both Manager of Clinical Services and Addictions Counsellor at Maple Ridge Treatment Centre. Before completing her Masters Degree in Counselling Psychology

and entering the field of addictions, Cathy was a public school teacher for 9 years. Cathy is also the author of *Rebuilding Relationships In Recovery: A Guide To Healing Relationships Impacted By Addiction* (2004).

Frequently Asked Questions

How do you help family members when they can't attend Family Program?

Family members can:

- stay in contact with Cathy Patterson-Sterling, Director of Family Services, while their loved one is in treatment and post-discharge
- read *Rebuilding Relationships in Recovery*, written by Cathy Patterson-Sterling. This book serves as the foundation for the Family Program and can be ordered from Sunshine Coast Health Center.
- receive our guide that helps parents support their adult children with the transition from treatment
- access weekly questions of the week for families on YouTube.

What do you do when a client is upset after receiving an unexpected phone call from their spouse or partner?

If client consents are in place, then the spouse or partner will be contacted by the Director of Family Services and provided initial support. The spouse or partner will then be provided ongoing email and telephone support outside of business hours during both the treatment phase and post-discharge. While a client can revoke consent to speak with a family member at any time, the Director of Family Services is often able to have consent reinstated after getting to know the client through weekly workshops, on-site meetings, and counselling sessions.