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# Contact Guidelines for Family Members



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## PHONE CALLS

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1. Family members are asked to exercise caution when talking with clients about matters that may be upsetting, particularly during the first week following admission when clients are settling into treatment. Please do not hesitate to contact the family program facilitator at 1-866-487-9050 ext. 205 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 Centre is legally bound to safeguard information about a client—including the client's presence in our program—unless that client 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 At Staff Request or Against Staff Advice), the Emergency Contact will be notified provided the client has not revoked the Authorization to Communicate.

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## MAIL

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

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## VISITING

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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. If you have any questions, please contact the family program facilitator at 1-866-487-9050 ext. 205 before booking travel plans.
2. Visitors must check in at the Reception desk and sign a Confidentiality Agreement before meeting with clients.
3. Any items brought to the Centre will be searched by a staff member.

*How You Can Help (see next page) ►*

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP WHILE YOUR LOVED ONE IS IN TREATMENT

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Entering treatment can be a time of great opportunity as well as an occasion for 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 situation. 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 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 clients 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 when a client acts on a desire to end treatment it may well prove counterproductive—especially if what they are thinking or feelings is a natural part of early recovery.

### Helpful Support:

- Understanding client's fluctuations in their commitment to recovery.
- Listen and be supportive without judging.
- Do not make hasty decisions. Stay calm and give the treatment process time.
- Do not assume that because a client 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 a client from their own upset feelings during treatment.
- Give a client time and space to come to terms with their own recovery program.
- Do not try to make a client feel guilty for being in a recovery program even if they are unable to help out with responsibilities at home.
- Ask the counsellor assigned to the client if you have any questions about the recovery program.
- Learn about ways to start your own healing process.

### Unhelpful Support:

- Agreeing with and supporting the upset client without understanding the full situation. Remember that you may be hearing only the part of a story the client wants you to know to justify his leaving treatment.
  - Minimizing the addiction problem and accepting that the client will get help at home if they want to.
  - Distracting a client from their recovery process by asking them for constant attention and assurance of being loved.
  - Demanding answers to past unresolved issues without using the help of a mediator or counsellor.
  - Telling the client that you feel jealous about the time that they are spending focusing on recovery. Remember that a client in a recovery program is working to become a better person. Therefore treatment is an investment for the future.
  - Assuming that a client in recovery is trying to be someone else or is under some “cultish” influence. Clients will learn new words and ways of communicating as a constructive part of the recovery process. Seek to understand the new language instead of feeling concerned by such changes.
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