



**Sunshine Coast  
Health Centre**

# *Family & Couples Services*

AN OVERVIEW OF TOOLS AND SUPPORT  
FOR CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Take Control



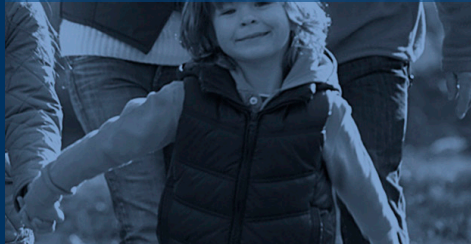
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## INTRODUCTION

We understand the critical role relationships have in successful treatment outcomes. As family members and partners of our male clients, you are part of the solution. Our services are not just designed to help your loved one. We are also here to help you find your own peace.



### Family Weekend

Family Programs are essential in helping family members learn about addiction, understand the impact of addiction on their relationships, begin the process of healing from emotional burn-out, and focus on how to prepare for life after their loved one completes residential treatment. The atmosphere of our Family Weekend is a supportive environment where family members and partners learn how to begin healing. Individuals will not be required to share close personal details if they do not want to and will not be labeled or defined as dysfunctional.

Family & Couples facilitators provide concrete skills and information that will help participants build on their own existing strengths while also providing them with a roadmap for the healing journey ahead. We make sure the overall tone of the Family Weekend is upbeat and positive.



### Couples Day

Participants in our Couples Day are given the opportunity to examine old patterns of relating to one another and find more empowering alternatives. We discuss the challenges of rebuilding relationships impacted by addiction and focus on re-establishing intimacy and communication and overcoming obstacles in the relationship rebuilding process.

We find that loved ones who attend the Family & Couples Weekend have a significant advantage over others who do not attend some form of family or marital therapy. By changing the family dynamic at home, clients are better equipped for the challenge of maintaining positive change achieved during treatment.



## WHY WE HAVE THE FAMILY & COUPLES WEEKEND

### Why We Added the Couples Day

Sunshine Coast Health Centre originally offered just the Family Weekend. However, spouses and partners in the Family Weekend would often request separate counselling dedicated exclusively to marital issues. The program has grown and taken on a life of its own to the point where word-of-mouth between clients is all that it takes to fill available seats in the Couples Day.

## HOW THE PROGRAMS HELP



### The Family Weekend

Our Family Weekend helps family members (1) gain an understanding of addiction, (2) learn new ways to cope, and (3) prepare themselves for their loved one's return home from SCHC.

Much of the popular media's descriptions of addictions are simplistic, providing little useful information for families. In our program, families discover a more scientifically accurate and useful way to understand addiction.

As important as it is to understand addiction, the real focus of the program is to help the family members find more successful ways to cope. In the past, families usually focused on the addicted family member, devising all sorts of ways to control him or her. Typically, these efforts rarely help.

Most families come into the weekend wondering how they can support their loved one. Most leave realizing that the best support is to help themselves and their loved one's take responsibility for their lives. The

family member has one healing journey, and their loved one has another. Each adult is the author of his or her life.

Content for the Family Weekend includes a scientific view of addiction, the dynamics of addiction within the family, common coping skills that families use to deal with the situation (and why they are rarely successful), and new skills that will work. The program also helps family members recognize and overcome the "quiet" emotions they have been enduring such as fear, helplessness, isolation and loneliness, and confusion.



### The Couples Day

Our Couples Day also follows the theme that each adult is the author of his or her life, except that there are two authors of the relationship. So the program is not about what the partner can do to prevent their loved one from using, it's about what makes a happy couple.

Using evidence-based principles, we offer techniques to rebuild trust, communication, and the relationship. The tone is positive and productive, rather than being a venue to vent anger at each other.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE FAMILY & COUPLES WEEKEND

### Available Dates

Sunshine Coast Health Centre offers the Family & Couples Weekend every month. For a schedule of the next available dates, call us toll-free at 1-866-487-9050 ext. 205. All participants must have their registration confirmed in order to attend.

### Location

The Family & Couples Weekend is held on campus in our Renewal Centre, the building closest to the ocean. The building is open at 7:45 am, and you are welcome to join us for a continental breakfast. Program starts at 8:30 am each day.

### Travel and Directions

Visit our Travel to Powell River section on [www.schc.ca](http://www.schc.ca) for air and car travel directions, accommodation, car rentals, and more!

### Fees

We feel your participation in the Family & Couples Weekend is so important that we include it in the residential treatment fee. Pending available space and pre-registration, members of the general public are also welcome to attend at no cost.

Travel expenses such as plane and ferry fares, fuel, accommodation<sup>1</sup>, and evening meals<sup>2</sup> are the responsibility of Family & Couples Weekend participants.

(1) Sunshine Coast Health Centre does not provide accommodations for Family & Couples Weekend participants.

(2) Continental breakfast and lunch is included. Participants are responsible to make their own dinner arrangements.





## Family Members Who Can Attend

A client may have up to three family members attend the Family & Couples Weekend at one time so that all clients have an opportunity to have a family member present. Family members exceeding three will be wait-listed and contacted if there is room in the program (maximum capacity is 20 participants). Please confirm participation at least one week before the to Family & Couples Weekend. Families may attend even after their family member completes residential treatment.

## Day Care During the Program

Sunshine Coast Health Centre does not provide day care to participants with children. However, we have some suggestions depending on the age of your child:

The father (client in treatment) may take care of his child(ren) while the mother is in the Family & Couples Weekend. An alternative caregiver will need to provide supervision during Couples Day on Monday and for a short period of time on Sunday. If a child is 16 or older and would like to participate, please check with the Family & Couples Facilitators to confirm development appropriateness.

There are also many childcare providers in town. If you would like assistance in securing childcare in Powell River during your stay, please let our coordinators know at [familyprogram@schc.ca](mailto:familyprogram@schc.ca) or 1.604.487.9050 ext. 205.

## Disclaimer

Please note that the Family & Couples Weekend is designed to be a primer workshop that provides some positive relationship rebuilding skills. It is NOT a replacement for family or marital therapy, nor a cure-all for relationship difficulties. Sunshine Coast Health Centre can refer you to a couples counsellor or marital therapist in your home community if you desire ongoing relationship counselling.



## FAMILY & COUPLES WEEKEND TESTIMONIALS

Names in the following testimonials have been fictionalized for reasons of confidentiality:

*I didn't get a chance to thank you for the weekend. I learned a lot about myself and ways to handle things when I get home. I was mentally exhausted before I came and after but at least now I have a peace of mind... Every person you meet usually leaves some sort of mark on your life and you have made a huge check on mine. I hope to get my other children to come to the program one weekend. Lisa (my daughter) learned more life skills and I am so happy for her. — Lynn*

*I just wanted to say again, "thank you." I have done many kinds of personal development over the years and I would say that the weekend I spent at SCHC 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! Take care. — Sara*

## ONLINE FAMILY SUPPORT



Participants who complete the Family & Couples Weekend also qualify for weekly online support with topics specific to significant others such as maintaining boundaries, personal growth, and supporting a loved one in recovery. As with online alumni support, participants have the opportunity to provide feedback, which is promptly reviewed by a SCHC clinician. Currently, this free program is available to family members for as long as they maintain a valid e-mail address with Sunshine Coast.

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



### 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 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. **Clients will usually go through a "grieving process" over the loss of their relationship with intoxication or addictive substances.** Family members and loved ones should 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 and there will be other moments when they experience incredible hope for the future. **Families need to keep in mind that when their loved one 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 your loved one'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 your loved one 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 loved one from their own upset feelings during treatment.
- Give your loved one time and space to come to terms with their own recovery program.
- Do not try to make a your loved one feel guilty for being in a recovery program even if they are unable to help out with responsibilities at home.
- Ask our Family & Couples Facilitator if you have any questions about your loved one's recovery program.
- Learn about ways to start your own healing process.



## UNHELPFUL SUPPORT



- Agreeing with and supporting your upset loved one without understanding the full situation. Remember that you may be hearing only the part of a story that he wants you to know to justify his leaving treatment.
- Minimizing the addiction problem and accepting that your loved one will get help at home if they want to.
- Distracting a loved one 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 your loved one that you feel jealous about the time they get to focus on recovery. Remember that your loved one is working to become a better person. Treatment is an investment for the future.
- Assuming that your loved one is trying to be someone else or is under some "cultish" influence. Clients will likely learn new words and ways of communicating while at SCHC. Seek to understand the new language instead of feeling concerned by such changes.







Sunshine Coast  
Health Centre

RESIDENTIAL ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH

# Treatment Services



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POWELL RIVER, BC  
V8A 0H8

ADMINISTRATION	1.604.487.9050
ADMISSIONS TOLL FREE	1.866.487.9010
FACILITY TOLL FREE	1.866.487.9050
FAX	1.888.875.0511
EMAIL	INFO@SCHC.CA

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Sunshine Coast Health Centre is licensed by the British Columbia Ministry of Health. Sunshine Coast Health Centre is an approved provider with the Blue Cross Federal Program. Sunshine Coast Health Centre is an accredited health care provider with Accreditation Canada.