



Student Placements & Practicums



**Sunshine Coast
Health Centre**
A Non-12 Step Mental Health Program

Georgia Strait
WOMENS CLINIC

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We would like to acknowledge that Sunshine Coast Health Centre and Georgia Strait Women's Clinic operate in the qathet Regional District on the traditional territories of the Tla'amin, Klahoose, Homalco, shíshálh, and K'ómoks peoples. We are thankful to be able to work and live within these territories. We raise our hands in gratitude for their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

With gratitude, we aim to protect and care for the environment and peoples on this part of the qathet Regional District that we have come to occupy and benefit from through colonialism.

Learning at Sunshine Coast Health Centre

A Collective Effort

Sunshine Coast Health Centre would be nothing without its staff. From housekeeping to nursing to counselling, our drug rehab and alcohol treatment programs depend on skilled, qualified individuals. Below is a current list of opportunities and open positions with us.

Are you looking for an organization at which to complete your practicum? We offer future healthcare practitioners the opportunity to learn and see how meaning, compassion, and kindness in mental health treatment can make a difference.



Career Development

We are committed to providing meaningful and quality placements for students in British Columbia and supporting them in their career development. We accept nursing, medical, and psychology students every year for most semesters. If you are interested in gaining experience or specializing in addictions, please email education@schc.ca.

Our Highly Skilled Team

We believe that every client deserves to have a highly skilled, compassionate, and curious team of professionals to help them. Our team provides a wide range of proven health treatments such as EMDR, Hypnotherapy, rTMS, DBT, and Somatic Therapy, because while some treatments help many, there is no treatment that works for everyone. Our extensive team of staff and limited peer group size let us offer the services of a large facility with the privacy and attention of a small one.

At Sunshine Coast Health Centre (SCHC) and Georgia Strait Women's Clinic (GSWC), we know the importance of providing meaningful, hands-on experience for students. We partner with educational institutions to offer placement opportunities, residencies and periodic fellowship opportunities for college and university students. These experiences enable students to learn key lessons, share new ideas and perspectives, and increase their confidence.

Placement opportunities offer students a chance to do the following:

Connect with multidisciplinary staff, volunteers, and community partners

Apply theory and classroom learning in their practice

Expand their awareness, knowledge, and understanding of mental health and substance use

Reflect on their own skills and abilities

CLINICAL PRACTICUMS

Psychology practicum students are offered the opportunity for placement in a clinical team offering mental health, addiction, and trauma services to men and women in separate gender specific residential programs. SCHC and GSWC are located in Powell River, BC, 15 minutes south of the city centre, with only a 5-minute drive separating the two. The specifics of training experiences (e.g., assessment versus intervention, start and finish dates, etc.) vary from one program to another.

Practicum students are usually assigned to one supervisor. Individual face-to-face supervision is typically offered once a week for one hour, but on-site/on-the-spot supervision frequently takes place throughout the course of training by multiple clinicians. There are also opportunities for group learning and supervision involving other placement and practicum students and supervising clinical staff at SCHC and GSWC.

NURSING PLACEMENT STUDENTS

SCHC and GSWC welcome many nursing students year-round. We look forward to having Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) join us in providing excellent client-centred care.

MEDICAL FELLOWSHIP STUDENTS

We offer fellowship opportunities to qualified applicants in a variety of areas.

Fellowship opportunities are only available to medical students and residents in a Canadian postgraduate medical education program or to trainees under an accredited Addiction Medicine Fellowship.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

We also offer placements to students working towards becoming Addiction & Mental Health Care Workers and Residential Care Aides (RCAs).

Our Philosophy



A Non-12-Step Program

Our non-12-step program methodology is unique and lets us be far more than an addiction treatment facility. While other centres focus on abstinence or harm reduction, we focus on helping our clients solve the underlying issues driving addictive behaviour or mental health suffering. This allows all clients to get the full benefit of our program.

Our Theory of Addiction

Our non-12-step program methodology for treating addiction, mental health, trauma, and PTSD comes from Dr. Viktor Frankl's proposition that the fundamental motivation in humans is the will to meaning. As humans, we need to make sense of our lives and pursue a personally meaningful existence. When we can't, we suffer real problems. In line with Frankl's theory, we see addiction as a result of an individual's persistently frustrated attempts to live a personally meaningful life.

Principles of Our Therapeutic Approach

Our programs stem from the theory and practice of Meaning-Centered Therapy (MCT), developed by psychologist Dr. Paul T. P. Wong, who used personal meaning as a way to organize different therapies, such as existential psychotherapy, CBT, narrative therapy, and positive psychology, into a unified therapeutic approach.

Our Values

We believe in connection, excellence, dignity, and transparency. These are the principles that inform all levels of care at our clinic.

The connection between our staff and each client is paramount. Our team of staff do not judge, embarrass, or talk down to clients at any point. We believe that the trust required to talk honestly about extremely personal issues cannot be built within unnecessarily restrictive, mean-spirited, and intimidating treatment environments.

We are committed to excellence and have the independently proven, long-term track record of providing residential mental health care. For us, it is of utmost importance to incorporate evolving scientific research of new treatments, to understand the mental health programming offered by other residential centres in North America, and to listen to our clients' feedback about what they need and how we can improve. We attempt to exceed the already high standards of Accreditation Canada and use those standards to drive our continuous efforts to improve.



Our collective background in generic mental healthcare before addiction treatment has instilled in us a commitment to human rights and the dignity of residential healthcare patients. Our clinical leaders do not tolerate mistreatment of any client at any time and believe that it's malpractice to shame and humiliate patients.

Businesses in the addiction treatment field are particularly secretive about what they are doing in regards to the care and therapeutic treatment of clients and what type of person is actually providing that care. We, however, are committed to transparency in our relationship with our clients. With us, clients will always receive transparency about the different routines inside the facility, the reasons we provide the types of care we do, the evidential proof for our treatments, and the rules clients can expect—along with the rationale behind those rules.



Our Approach



Psychological

Counselling Therapies

Our counselling therapies help clients explore how they see the world and their place in it, with the goal of personal healing and growth. Our clinical staff is trained in numerous therapeutic techniques such as narrative therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, and dialectic behavioural therapy. Counsellors use the techniques that best suit the client.



Physical

Medical & Physical

Our medical and psychiatric services include assessment and diagnosis, withdrawal management/detox, medication management, psychotropic drug therapy, and ongoing monitoring throughout your stay. Medical and psychiatric assessments form the basis of treatment plans and are critical to treating any co-existing mental health issues.

Nutrition & Fitness Support

Our fitness and nutrition team provides consultations for all clients and continues to work with clients throughout their stay to develop their personalized treatment plan.



Spiritual

Spiritual Support

Unlike most treatment facilities, we are careful not to enforce spiritual exploration. While we believe a spiritual life can be incredibly helpful, insisting on it is unhelpful and creates frustration. With us, spiritual activities are strictly voluntary and include discussion groups, one-to-one counselling sessions, and transportation to and from local churches.



Social

Recreation Services

Recreational services are an important part of a healthy lifestyle, encouraging both physical health and social health. Recreation is also an important part of developing a long-term recovery plan that helps replace the hours spent consuming drugs and alcohol.

Community Connection

Our clients are regularly out in the community with staff, engaging in a number of non-fitness activities such as shopping, attending movies, helping out with vulnerable youth, and enjoying annual events like Canada Day and the local Blackberry Festival.

Our Therapeutic Approach

Meaning Therapy

Meaning therapy serves as the foundation of our clinical program, not only because it is the therapy most supported by addiction research but also for its focus on the therapeutic relationship. To facilitate the client-therapist relationship, we use addiction counselling methods developed by the pioneering psychologist Carl Roger (1902–1987), that include principles of empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard.

Why Meaning Therapy?

Everyone tries to make sense of themselves, their world, and their place in the world. When our perceptions do not resonate with reality, we suffer unnecessarily. Meaning therapy aims to help clients make sense of their lives in a way that is consistent with their experiences, values, beliefs, and actions. It examines what human beings require to flourish in their lives despite suffering.

Meaning therapy arises from theory and is based on empirical research. As a stand-alone therapy, it has been shown effective in helping many populations, including those suffering from cardiac problems, terminal illness, workplace stress, geriatric issues, depression and anxiety, PTSD, and, of course, addictions.

Research has shown that those suffering from addictions have a weak sense of self and high external motivations and goals. These individuals are also easily bored and depressed. Personal striving and positive coping skills have long since dissipated. They see themselves as different and they lack a sense of control over their lives. Our clients typically refer to this vacuum as a “void” or “emptiness.” Addiction is a response to this life.



Our Meaning-Centred Model interprets addiction in line with the work of psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who stated that addiction is “not understandable unless we recognize the existential vacuum underlying [it].” To put it another way, addiction is a response to living a life that lacks personal meaning.

Our program helps clients begin the process of finding meaning and purpose. Mainstream therapies for addictions are generally limited to helping clients attain a measure of physical and emotional stability. Meaning therapy, however, allows us to better help clients by moving beyond healing brokenness and toward flourishing in life, despite suffering. Research studies indicate that recovery is about a transformational change. **In other words, stable abstinence is the byproduct of living a meaningful life.**

Principles of Meaning Therapy

THE WHOLE HUMAN BEING IS CENTRE STAGE

Therapy must be client-centered and treat the whole, complex, unique human being.

EACH PERSON IS THE AUTHOR OF HIS OR HER LIFE

Also known as existential responsibility, authorship means clients are responsible for making decisions that will dictate the kind of life they live. Our therapists do not tell a client what to do, think, or feel. They offer no ready-made answers. Rather, they help clients in the struggle to find their own answers.

PEOPLE GROW IF THEY HAVE NO NEED TO DENY OR DISTORT EXPERIENCE

Rogerian principles—unconditional positive regard, advanced accurate empathy, and genuineness—are the foundation for therapy. Confrontation as a counselling style is considered unethical.

PEOPLE ARE RELATIONAL BEINGS

Relatedness is a foundational construct in psychology. How clients interact in the group, regardless of the content of discussion, is important. Process therapy is a key piece to help clients develop interpersonal relatedness.



THERE ARE LITTLE MEANINGS AND BIG MEANINGS

Therapy focuses on the little meanings. What is the meaning that the client gives to an experience? What values are authentically important to the client? How can the client respond to an event/condition with responsibility and courage?

MEANING IS FORWARD LOOKING

Therapy encourages clients to live in the present but keep an eye on the future. Having a direction in life and pursuing goals demands that clients be future-oriented.

MEANING EMPHASIZES THE POSITIVE GIVENES OF EXISTENCE

All people face the negative givens of life, such as death, grief, and loneliness. Our therapy helps clients develop resilience, face fears, take control of their lives, and turn negatives into sources of personal growth.

MEANING THERAPY IS NOT TECHNIQUE DRIVEN

Our program helps clients see how the ways they make sense of their lives have led to unnecessary suffering. We then help clients develop new ways of living that are consistent with their values.

Components of Meaning Therapy

Research indicates that meaningful living has **four** components:

COGNITIVE – Typically, those suffering from addictions make sense of life in ways that are not responsive to their reality. Therapy helps clients understand who they are, learn to live comfortably with ambiguity, and develop a “growth mindset.”

MOTIVATIONAL – Motivations are most productive when they are based on the client’s authentic values and beliefs. Research is clear that such intrinsic motivations are far more powerful than extrinsic ones. While with us, clients learn to make decisions based on what is authentically important to them.



BEHAVIOURAL – Action is essential to meaningful living. If a client doesn't take action, therapy is useless. Practicing new skills while in treatment is a key piece of therapy.

AFFECTIVE – Research has also shown that well-being need not necessarily be attached to pleasure and comfort. The construct of eudaimonic happiness suggests that living a meaningful life is more fulfilling than living a pleasurable one.

Formats of Meaning Therapy

GROUP THERAPY – Group is our main therapy format and takes place every morning. Process therapy is a key method of group therapy.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY – One-on-one therapy is generally reserved for issues that clients may not yet feel comfortable enough to share in group, or motivational/behavioural issues affecting one client. Individual sessions are also used for hypnotherapy, neurofeedback, and EMDR. These sessions take place outside of group therapy.

WORKSHOPS – Workshops cover neurobiological, psychological, and sociocultural topics with a special focus on addiction within a meaning framework.

Results of Meaning Therapy

According to SCHC's research, which is grounded in client data, meaning therapy has three major influences:

INCREASED SELF-DEFINITION – The most salient aspect of clients pre-treatment is a remarkably weak sense of self. They cannot answer the question, "Who am I?" and instead, rely on the external world for guidance, entertainment, and reassurance. Post-treatment, our clients are more aware of authentic values, able to reflect on what they are feeling and why, are more aware of the meanings they assign to things, and able to make decisions that are more in line with their needs.

INCREASED INTERPERSONAL RELATEDNESS – Pre-treatment, clients generally have disrupted relationships with family, partners, employers, and friends. Post-treatment, they report renewed efforts to rebuild relationships with those important to them.

INCREASED INTERNAL MOTIVATION – Pre-treatment, clients have external motivations and goals. Post-treatment, there is a noticeable shift toward intrinsic motivations and goals.

Clients report they have (1) a "road map" to follow, (2) optimism for the future, and (3) confidence that they could succeed. It is particularly instructive that two-thirds of the research participants post-treatment reported that they would not use substances even if there were no negative consequences. They had concluded that addiction had doomed any attempt to live a fulfilling life.

Testimonials

“I felt truly inspired by the work done at the facility, as well as the wealth of knowledge shared among the team members.”

“During my practical nursing course I felt very drawn to mental health and addictions. I was presented with the opportunity to complete my final 6 week preceptorship at Sunshine Coast Health Centre. I got to work closely not only with the other LPNs, but also RPNs and the doctors. The team also consists of counsellors, nutritionists, kinesiologists, and more. It was a welcoming environment that gave me many learning opportunities. I developed strengths in many aspects as a practical nurse. Some areas include developing therapeutic relationships with clients, collaboration with other clinical members, medication knowledge, as well as independence in clinical decisions. I felt truly inspired by the work done at the facility, as well as the wealth of knowledge shared among the team members. My goals of where I wanted to go with my career were validated. I feel incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity as a student and now, as a working licensed practical nurse. After completing my program I chose to pursue a career with Sunshine Coast Health Centre as I felt truly inspired by the work and learning atmosphere. Being a contribution to the team, as well as working with the clients is truly rewarding.”

– Sarita



“I completed my psychosocial rehabilitation clinical practicum as a psychiatric nursing student at both Sunshine Coast Health Centre and Georgia Strait Women’s Clinic and was absolutely blown away. Their inclusive approaches to treatment, care, and the many different types of therapies provided is astonishing—not to mention the breath-taking view. It was an amazing experience and privilege to witness and partake in such passionate, forward thinking. All of the staff in each department made me feel so welcomed; everyone is so kind, patient, helpful, and works as a team to provide holistic meaningful care. After completing my clinical practicum, I look forward to working at these wonderful facilities with these amazing people as an RPN!”

– Heidi



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