

Primary Care Psychologist

The Primary Care Psychologist has a doctoral degree in clinical or counselling psychology and has completed a one-year, 1600 hour residency in clinical/counseling psychology. They are registered with the College of Psychologists of BC. The Primary Care Psychologist provides mental and behavioral health services and is skilled in the use of targeted assessment, diagnosis, and brief treatment approaches for mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, substance use, etc.), medical conditions (e.g., chronic pain, irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes management, etc.) and health behavior change (e.g., weight management, tobacco cessation, exercise, etc.). The Primary Care Psychologist is on site with the clinic's care team and provides services that are fully integrated into the patient's care plan.

Primary care psychologists have a broad base of knowledge on topics such as health psychology, primary care behavioural health, chronic diseases, processes of behaviour change, developmental issues, trauma-informed care, effective team consultation, supervision, relevant legislation and regulations, quality improvement, quality assurance and research, program evaluation, and interpersonal team-dynamics.

In addition to providing direct patient services, the Primary Care Psychologist provides supervision to psychology residents/fellows/externs within the primary care behavioural health model as well as medical residents and medical students. The Primary Care Psychologist supports curriculum development and teaching for Family Medicine residents. Finally, the Primary Care Psychologist engages in clinical research and quality improvement initiatives that relate to primary care and primary care training.

The Primary Care Psychologist responsibilities include the following:

- 1) Maintains a visible presence to the PCPs during clinic operating hours.
- 2) Is available for "curbside" consultation (a brief interaction between the PCPsych and a PCP) by being in the clinic or available by phone or pager.
- 3) Is available for same day and scheduled brief (15-30 minute) appointments with patients referred by PCPs.
 - a) Patients may be referred in-the-moment via "warm hand-offs" or the PCP may request that the PCPsych see the patient for a scheduled visit.
- 4) Provides brief interventions for patients based on a variety of modalities (including motivational interviewing, brief CBT, Focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Solution-Focused Therapy, etc.) and attempts to introduce intervention as early as possible after meeting patients.
- 5) May provide PCPs with same-day feedback on client encounters either in person, by phone and prepares brief consultant notes using the same EMR as the PCP that explain assessment findings, diagnoses, interventions delivered, and recommendations.
- 6) Provides a range of services including screening for common conditions, assessments, differential diagnosis, and interventions related to mental health, chronic disease management, subthreshold conditions, and lifestyle behaviour factors.
- 7) Provides psycho-education for patients during individual and group visits.

- 8) Assists in the development of clinical pathways, group medical appointments, and behavior focused practice protocols.
- 9) Maintains an up-to-date library of patient education materials for commonly seen problems. Identifies, reviews, and modifies educational materials for literacy level and cultural appropriateness.
- 10) Triage patients with severe or high-risk behavioral problems to other community resources for specialty MH services consistent with Step up/Step-down criteria.
- 11) Collaborates with MH / SU services, and when appropriate, supports a smooth transition from specialty MH / SU services back to primary care; is the point of contact for the patient to optimize care and ensure that no patient falls through the cracks during this transition.
- 12) Works closely and regularly with other allied health professions within the primary care network to provide best-practice consultation, as needed...
- 13) Maintains clinical records and other necessary paperwork in a timely manner to comply with all administrative regulations.
- 14) Supports PCPs in the basic principles of brief behavioral and cognitive behavioral interventions to reinforce their use in the medical visit.
- 15) Supports collaboration of PCPs and psychiatrists concerning medication protocols.
- 16) Provides assistance in capturing program evaluation and fidelity measures.
- 17) Attends clinic meetings, including all staff, PCP, and Clinic Leadership meetings.