



# **Guide to Mental Health Resources in Canada**



# Ready to take the first step towards recovery?

**DISCLAIMER:**

THIS GUIDE DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF ADVICE FROM A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER. IF YOU ARE IN AN IMMEDIATE CRISIS OR DANGER, PLEASE CALL 9-1-1.

Navigating Canada's mental health and addiction support system can be a confusing process. EHN's Mental Health Guide is intended to provide information regarding mental health services, supports, and resources in Canada. It is an overview of the tools, professionals, and programs a person or their loved ones may want to access throughout their recovery.

**PG    RESOURCE TYPE**

- 1**    Apps / Virtual Tools

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- 2**    Counselling / Therapy

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- 3**    Accessing Peer Support

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## Apps / Virtual Tools

Smartphones have changed the way people approach their health and wellness. Virtual options provide excellent mindfulness tools and can help maintain positive mental health or introduce healthy habits, but do not replace licensed therapy or structured programs.

### MENTAL HEALTH APPS

Apps for mental health vary in complexity and efficiency depending on a few factors: an individual's condition, the level of support they require, and the importance of connecting with peers are all relevant considerations. Some apps offer deep breathing techniques and mood tracking that are more universal, while some assist with specific mental illnesses. For those undergoing certain types of therapy, there are apps that teach self-help skills and mirror what is taught in therapy. Clinicians can also recommend apps for their clients to help keep them accountable and provide progress updates between sessions.

### PROGRAM-ACCOMPANYING APPS

Some mental health programs have accompanying apps to help provide more support. These apps often help you to keep track of your program schedule, track progress, and revisit important skills such as meditation or emotional regulation. This helps you keep the important work you're doing top-of-mind and accessible from anywhere. It's also great for maintaining communication with your program counsellor, and some apps include crisis management or SOS features.

### TYPES OF APPS

- Social Media and Peer Support Platforms
- Telehealth / Telemedicine
- Meditation and Relaxation
- Mood Tracking
- Problem Solving
- Accompanying a Program

### TECHNOLOGY IS COMPLIMENTARY, NOT A REPLACEMENT

While apps are a helpful and accessible resource, they are NOT a replacement for professional help, nor are they intended to be. Technology works in addition to other tools like therapy. It is also important to do your research when it comes to choosing which apps might work best for you. Talking to a mental health professional about your options is a great way to help narrow them down. It is important to remember that no single app is right for everyone.



## Counselling / Therapy

There is a wide variety of mental health professionals in Canada. Keep in mind that not all professionals are regulated in every province.

### PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Psychotherapists use personal treatment plans and a variety of non-medical-based treatments to help solve specific problems or treat mood disorders. Using talk therapy, they provide insight to challenge thought or behaviour patterns that contribute to mood or other problems. They use different approaches that may include behavioural, cognitive-behavioural, and gestalt therapy, among others. Although Psychotherapists treat people with clinical diagnoses (e.g. Depression, OCD), they are not licensed to provide a diagnosis or prescribe medication. They commonly work in rehabilitation centres, multidisciplinary health clinics, and in private practice.

### PSYCHIATRISTS

Psychiatrists are medical doctors with specialized training in diagnosis and treatment of mental health conditions. Because physicians are publicly funded, you should not need to pay any fees to see one, even for those in private practice. Seeing a psychiatrist requires a referral from a physician. Psychiatrists are the only mental health professionals listed here who can prescribe medication.

### SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers collaborate with clients to address challenges through a process of assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and evaluation. Registered social workers have a specialized university education and participate in continued professional learning and skills development.

### PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES

Psychologists and Psychological Associates (PA) are trained in the research, assessment, treatment, and prevention of behavioural and mental conditions. They diagnose neuropsychological, psychotic, neurotic and personality disorders and dysfunctions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. In addition, Psychologists and PAs use a variety of approaches directed toward the maintenance and enhancement of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and interpersonal functioning. A Psychologist or a PA may work with a variety of individuals of all ages or may focus their attention on families, couples, or organizations. They work in schools, hospitals, social services, rehabilitation facilities, and correctional facilities. Many Psychologists and PAs have their own private practice.

### CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

Counselling relationships will vary according to need but may be concerned with developmental issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, working through feelings of inner conflict or improving relationships with others. Clinical counsellors work in hospitals, government agencies, private practice and any number of healthcare or other professional environments.



## Programs for Peer Support

Peer support groups can provide a safe and judgement-free place to talk about your mental health symptoms and struggles. Participating in these groups helps to reduce isolation and foster a network of friendly support. Groups like this help to increase the likelihood of positive results when used in conjunction with structured mental health programs or services. Groups can now be accessed within communities, or online.

It is important to consider whether peer support groups are best for you. While many people benefit from the unity and support provided, ask yourself whether you are in the right place to hear potentially upsetting stories and concerns from others in your group.

### 1. Government Services:

The government runs and funds a variety of mental health services, including peer support groups for mental health. Admission for these groups vary, with some being drop-in, and some being specific cohorts. Ask your family doctor for direction, or check out your local hospital for peer support programs.

### 2. Peer-Led Groups:

There are many peer-led groups available for recovery support, the most popular of which is Alcoholics Anonymous. For those looking for a non-religious-based option, SMART recovery is available. Please note that these programs are led by people in recovery, not licensed counsellors or therapists

Some peer support services are specific to those with a particular mental health condition, or who are part of a unique community. Examples of groups include LGBTQIA+, condition-specific (i.e. Bipolar support group), gender-specific, and mental health support for older people, single parents, or those with a disability.

### 3. Online Support Groups:

Online communities can help to foster a support group without the limits of geographical location or privacy concerns. These groups are helpful to those who live in remote locations or follow tight schedules. Sometimes it can be difficult to open up to local acquaintances, so online groups allow those seeking more privacy to connect with people from further away and feel more comfortable sharing their story. There is a wide variety of paid and funded support groups available on the internet, and without geographical limits, it can be easier to find something free or specific to your symptoms. Support groups available online include Hope + Me, or MyRelief.



## Programs for Family Support

Programs for families and loved ones vary and depend on each person's specific needs and lifestyle.

Family support groups can provide a safe place where the loved ones of those struggling with their mental health can find support for themselves. Participating in these groups alongside the recovery of your loved one can help to maintain your own mental wellness, and feel confident in the support you are offering your loved one. Community discussions like this can provide a great source of comfort and relief for both the supporter, and the person you're trying to support. These group programs can be found in many communities and also online.

### 1. Program-Concurrent Family Groups:

Some mental health programs run family groups or family therapy alongside their regular programming. This provides the knowledge and skills necessary to support both the recovering loved one, and the family member. When run concurrently with a mental health program, family members can ensure that they are on the same page as their recovering loved one, understanding the coping skills being taught, reducing codependency, and learning how to most effectively move forward, while also protecting and nurturing their own mental health.

EHN Canada provides comprehensive programming to support those in recovery across all aspect of their life. Participants of EHN Canada mental health and addiction programs can invite an unlimited number of loved ones to attend complimentary family programming

### 2. Professional Family Groups:

These groups are run by professional therapists with a background in social work or psychology. Some are private and require a fee while others are public with no fee. You can find public family groups through mental health treatment helplines in Canada.

### 3. Peer-Led Family Groups:

These groups are run by a person with lived experience who is not a professional therapist. These groups are generally free, with the option to make a donation. You can also find peer-led family groups through mental health treatment helplines in Canada.



## Inpatient Programs

Inpatient or residential treatment is when you spend a set amount of time — usually one to three months — in recovery. This means leaving home and taking time off from your normal routine to focus on recovery.

Government or public care programs are scarce and for most people, their inpatient experience consists of ER stabilization before being sent home and expected to arrange a follow up with their family doctor on their own. Longer inpatient stays under government care are more likely to require a physician referral. Speak to your family doctor for assistance.

In private residential treatment, you'll spend time in a highly structured environment that's designed to promote recovery, and benefit from multiplet modes of therapy (group, one-on-one, and family). Residential treatment programs are unique because they allow you to reflect on unhelpful habits under the guidance of mental health professionals.

Private care facilities practices vary, and while they often accept referrals, they typically conduct their own intake assessment to determine fit. Contact the admissions department of a private care facility to learn about their wait times and intake requirements.

Treatment / Facility	Government Care	Private Care
Customized Program	21-day program	Program durations vary
Wait Time	3-6 month wait	Within days
Aftercare	3 Months	One Year*
Client to Counsellor Ratio	10:1	3:1**
Treatment Plan	Standardized	More individualized to client
Family Support	Limited	Included in plan*
Long-Term Support	Limited	Readily available*

\*Based on EHN Canada's programs

\*\*Estimated ratio is not guaranteed and can vary

# 6.



## Outpatient Programs

Outpatient treatment is another version of a mental health treatment service. Instead of staying in the facility, you meet several times per week. In many cases, the content of the program is similar to inpatient treatment. Residential and outpatient treatment programs can also both include a mix of group sessions, one-on-one counselling, and family therapy sessions.

If you have a strong support system and a safe, calm living environment, outpatient treatment can be the perfect solution. Many outpatient program participants can successfully go through a program while remaining present with their families and in their jobs. Outpatient treatment works best when someone's condition hasn't become too severe or if they've finished inpatient treatment and want a step-down program to transition into their new life in recovery. If you're not sure whether inpatient or outpatient is the right choice for you or your loved one, our team can provide an assessment to help you decide. Many outpatient programs are available entirely online, increasing their flexibility for location and time.

Inpatient	Outpatient
Patient stays in the facility	Patient lives at home and attends sessions either in person or virtually
Higher cost	Lower cost
Must take time away from daily life	Maintain a relatively normal routine
Constant support	Varying times and levels of support. Crisis support availability varies.
28 days to six months program	Three to 12+ months program
Detox and 24/7 nursing support available for management of severe symptoms	Requires stable home environment and self-regulated abstinence
Develop and practice skills to use after program completion	Develop and utilize skills in real-time



## Getting Started

Now that you are aware of the wide variety of mental health solutions available in Canada, it's time to access the support that you deserve. Follow this step-by-step guide to get started on your journey to recovery.

1. Identify the service that best suits you. The following chart might help to provide further guidance and reflection. Conduct additional research to ensure the program is best for you.

Treatment	What is it:	Who is it right for:
Virtual and/or Peer Support	Self-selected frequency and duration sessions to learn and maintain recovery skills.	Those with minimal symptoms looking for coping mechanisms or support.
Individual Counselling	Weekly sessions with a counselor or therapist, in-person or online.	Those with mild symptoms looking to reduce the chances of escalation.
Intensive Outpatient Treatment	Almost daily individual and group therapy, in-person or online.	Those with moderate symptoms, working around family or work obligations or looking for additional support after inpatient treatment.
Inpatient Treatment	Completing treatment in a live-in facility under the care of doctors and mental health professionals.	Those with severe symptoms, who require 24/7 support to achieve and maintain recovery.

2. If the service you decided upon requires a referral, arrange an appointment with your family physician. They might also be able to help guide you into the best program.  
**Private care programs do not require a doctor's referral.**
3. Contact the service of your choosing by visiting their website. Most places should offer communication by phone and/or email, and can further discuss treatment plans, payment (if applicable), determine your suitability, and provide any other information you request. You can complete a short assessment to confirm suitability.
4. Submit intake forms, make payments (if applicable) and get started on your route to recovery!



**EHN makes getting started easy. Call us for a free assessment. If you would like to sign up for an inpatient or virtual outpatient program, our admissions counsellors can complete your intake and help you begin treatment in as early as one week.**

**1-866-512-1096**  
**[www.ehncanada.com](http://www.ehncanada.com)**