

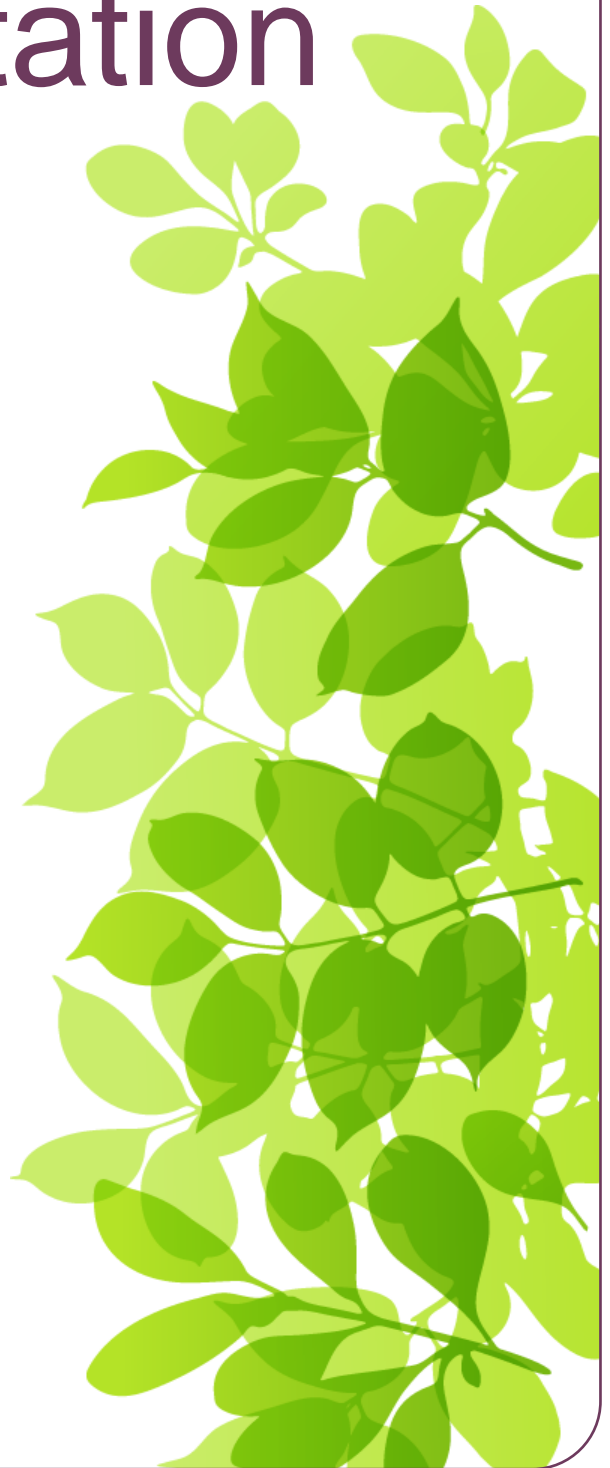
Addiction and Mental Health  
Calgary Zone

# Client Orientation Handbook

Your guide to an  
Alberta Health Services'  
Addiction and  
Mental Health Clinic

This Client Orientation Handbook is for clients enrolled in the following clinics:

- Community Addiction and Mental Health Clinic (Northeast, South, Central, Northwest)
- Adult Addiction Services
- Addiction Centre
- Adult Psychosis Program
- Early Psychosis Intervention Program
- Mood Disorders Program
- Anxiety Disorders Clinic
- Women's Mental Health Clinic
- Dialectical Behavioural Therapy Clinic
- Indigenous Mental Health
- Community Geriatric Clinic
- Carnat Centre for Mental Health Rehabilitation



# Welcome

First, we want you to know you are not alone. By taking the time to learn about the addiction and / or mental health services available to you, you are taking a key step toward your recovery. We welcome the opportunity to support you in this journey. This client handbook has been developed to help you understand what an Alberta Health Services' (AHS) Addiction and Mental Health (AMH) clinic can provide. It will tell you how to get the most from your addiction and / or mental health care, and help you determine if this is the right service for you at this time. It will also provide you with answers to the following questions:

- What does an AMH clinic do?
  - What can I expect from an AMH clinic?
  - What will an AMH clinic expect from me?
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## What does an AMH clinic do?

An AMH clinic provides assessment, treatment, support, and relapse management for mental health and / or addiction concerns. (See: Your mental healthcare journey: P.3).

An AMH clinic does not provide third-party assessments (i.e. insurance, disability, workplace compensation, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped), court mandated treatment, urgent care services or crisis services.

(See: What if I need to be seen urgently? P.5).

## What can I expect from an AMH clinic?

You can expect to work on goals related to your mental health and / or addiction concerns. You, as an active participant, and your mental health professional will discuss your goals, the steps to help achieve them, and the timelines required. You will be a partner in your care, working together with your mental health professional or clinic care team.

AMH clinics provide goal-oriented and time-limited treatment. Recovery is a journey, and the work to address your concerns will continue even after you have completed your care with us. You and your mental healthcare professional will create a plan to help you navigate future challenges.

AMH clinics strive to provide high quality patient- and family-centred care. This means you can expect:

- To be treated with dignity and respect.
- Open communication with your mental health professional or AMH clinic care team.
- Your family, culture, ethnicity, and community supports are incorporated in your care, as desired.
- Your strengths will be recognized and developed.

## What will an AMH clinic expect of me?

In the spirit of working together as partners to help you achieve your mental health and / or addiction-related goals, we ask that you:

- Treat mental health professionals and the AMH clinic care team with dignity and respect.
- Communicate openly.
- Be open to learning more about your mental health.
- Be an active participant in your care by practicing new skills, asking questions and sharing thoughts.
- Identify any other mental health professionals from whom you are currently receiving care or have received care from in the past, as this is important for planning your AMH clinic treatment.

There are additional expectations for clients related to confidentiality and attendance. (See: Informed consent and confidentiality on P.6 and Clinic attendance on P.5).



# Your mental health care journey

There are a number of steps to complete as part of your care. These include assessment, receiving and participating in care, and transitioning to ongoing supports. Each are described here. The care your mental health professional provides may be done in person or online using secure online software.

## 1 STEP Assessment

The first step—assessment—is when a mental health professional collects information to better understand you, your concerns and how to best meet your needs. This may include conversations with your family—if desired—completing questionnaires, completing standardized assessment tools, and reviewing past and current health information.

While assessment is the focus of the first appointment, it will continue throughout your time in an AMH clinic. If you previously spoke with a mental health professional at Access Mental Health, this assessment will build upon that information.

## 2 STEP Receiving care/ Participating in care

Receiving and participating in care—also known as treatment or therapy—within an AMH clinic will be change-oriented, goal-focused and time-limited. It focuses on:

- Understanding addiction and / or mental health symptoms and their impacts.
- Reducing, stabilizing and managing symptoms.
- Learning and practicing new skills during sessions and between sessions.
- Building your strengths and resilience.

Your care is customized to help you reach your mental health and / or addiction-related goals. A number of AMH clinic supports and treatment options are listed here. Information about the options specific to your clinic will be provided separately.

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Psychiatry consultations and treatment
- Medication management
- Case management
- Outreach supports
- Additional supports specific to your clinic, connections to community resources, including peer supports, social supports and cultural supports

As your care is customized to your needs, it may not include everything listed.

Once your goals have been set, a care plan will be developed with you outlining the support and treatment options to help you meet them. This plan will be developed and shared with you and your family physician.

Care within an AMH clinic is change-oriented. This is different from supportive therapy\* which involves talking about your struggles without the expectation that you will work on goals or changes. Change-oriented therapy focuses on your immediate concerns and future goals. It involves purposeful conversations during appointments, practicing new skills during and between appointments, and assessing the changes you are experiencing.

As well, your care may or may not involve a psychiatrist, depending on your needs and goals. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor with specialized training in mental health who can clarify diagnoses, provide care directly, and make recommendations related to stabilization and medication.

\*If you're interested in supportive therapy, your AMH clinic can provide you with a list of local services.

## 3 STEP Transitioning to ongoing supports

After completing your care within an AMH clinic, you and your mental health professional will develop a transition plan that will guide your recovery going forward. This could include your family physician, as well as community-based services and resources.

Let your mental health professional know if you don't have a family physician and need help accessing one, or visit [ahs.ca/findadoctor](https://ahs.ca/findadoctor).

## Setting goals

Care related to mental health and / or addictions is most effective when your goals are clear for both you and the AMH clinic staff working with you.

If you enter your mental health journey without goals or an idea about what you want to change, you might not reach that destination.

Questions for you to consider ahead of time and that can be discussed with your mental health professional early on may include:

- What do I want from my AMH clinic care?
- What do I hope to work on?

- If I imagine that my care with the AMH clinic has ended, and was a big success, what would look different?

As on any journey, you might change your mind part way, or find a quicker route to your goals. But it is a good idea to start with an idea of what you want.

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## Preparing for your first appointment

During your first appointment, your mental health professional will get to know you, better understand your concerns and your goals. Here's how you can prepare:

### 1 Think about your goals

It is important to think about what you want out of your care and bring these ideas to your first appointment. Mental health professionals will work with you to establish goals within your first or second appointment.

### 2 Identify your supports

The people and strategies that currently support your wellness are important in your care and recovery. Identify other professional supports, your family physician, as well as the family members, friends, or helpful people or strategies you are using.

### 3 Prepare a list of your medications

Your AMH clinic mental health professional or AMH clinic care team will let you know if this step applies to you.

If you take medications, you play a role in your medication safety. If medication changes are required as part of your care, you will be asked to prepare a list of the medications you're taking and how and when you take them.

This information is then shared with the AMH clinic physician or nurse to inform medication decisions.



Medications are more than what a doctor prescribes. They can include:

- Pills, liquids, patches, inhalers, eye / ear/ nose drops, creams, lotions, ointments, and samples a doctor may have given you.
- Anything you buy over the counter, such as painkillers, cold medicines, laxatives, vitamins, minerals, homeopathic, natural or herbal remedies.
- Recreational drugs.

➤ This medication review is called medication reconciliation and is described in more detail here: [myhealth.alberta.ca/know-your-medications](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/know-your-medications)

## Your AMH clinic care team



Your AMH clinic care team will vary depending on your needs. You will work with a primary mental health professional. Mental health professionals have a wide range of experiences and may be nurses, social workers or psychologists. Depending on your needs and goals, other AMH clinic team members—

such as psychiatrists, recreation therapists, occupational therapists, or peer support workers—may be involved. Those involved in your care will be outlined in your care plan.

Your family physician is an important member of your healthcare team. They remain your lead healthcare provider even when you are enrolled in an AMH clinic. The AMH

clinic is a supporting service. They will receive updates related to your care during and after your AMH clinic involvement. You are encouraged to stay connected with them.

Other members of your care team may include family members, close friends, or community-based supports identified by you.

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## Clinic attendance



AMH clinics have expectations related to attendance. These help each AMH clinic serve clients fairly and equitably.

### Late arrival

If you are late for your appointment, your time with your mental health professional may be limited. If you are more than 15 minutes late, your appointment will be rescheduled and considered a no-show.

### Cancellations

We require at least 24-hours notice if you need to cancel an appointment, but would appreciate as much notice as possible. This allows us to fill the time with another client.

Cancelling without 24-hours notice will be considered a no-show.

### Illness

If you are feeling unwell or have an infectious illness, we ask you to reschedule your appointment. This will not be considered a no-show.

### File closure

Your first appointment is very important. If it is missed, two attempts will be made to contact you. Your file will be closed if the clinic cannot reach you.

If you have two no-show appointments in a row, or a total

of three or more cancellations or no-shows, your file will be reviewed by the clinic and may be closed.

Any exceptions to these attendance expectations will be addressed by your mental health professional.

Contact the AMH clinic if you have any questions, require additional support to attend appointments, or if you feel it is not the right time for you to engage with an AMH clinic. AMH clinic staff can explore other options to support your needs.

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## What if I need to be seen urgently?



AMH clinics offer scheduled appointments only and have a very limited availability to respond to urgent concerns.

However, there are many options available for single-session, telephone supports, or emergency supports when needed.

The brochure Know Your Addiction and Mental Health Options (see link below) directs you to these services.

 [Visit ahs.ca/accessmh](https://ahs.ca/accessmh)

# Informed consent and confidentiality



Informed consent is guided by Alberta law and AHS policy, to ensure you understand and agree to receive healthcare services. You can expect to discuss informed consent at your first appointment.

Confidentiality is very important in healthcare. AMH clinic staff follow procedures and policies to ensure your confidentiality and that of other clients is respected.

AHS keeps everything you share as part of a clinic visit confidential with the exception of the following instances:

- If you disclose, or a healthcare provider has reason to believe, that you are likely to harm yourself or others. The necessary steps will be taken to ensure your safety and the safety of others.

- If you disclose, or a healthcare provider has reason to believe, that a child has been abused or neglected. This will be reported to Alberta Child and Family Services as required by law.
- If you disclose that you are watching / viewing child pornography. This will be reported to the Calgary Police Service and Alberta Child and Family Services.
- If your records are subpoenaed by the court, AHS must comply with the request.
- If your mental health professional needs to consult any AHS AMH team member regarding your care in order to collaborate in your care plan.

Your family physician will receive updated information regarding your care at an AMH clinic. If you do not wish this to happen, you must inform your AMH clinic mental health professional. If anyone outside of AHS requests information, it will only be released with a signed consent from you.

We expect that our clients also respect the confidentiality of both the clinic and the other clients attending the clinic.

Be aware that audio / visual recordings of any session (group, individual, etc.) without consent is a breach of confidentiality, is taken very seriously and could result in discharge from the clinic. This includes recording using cellphones.

# Providing feedback



Your feedback is important to us. It helps us better understand positive client experiences as well as areas where we can improve care. We encourage you to share your feedback at any point in your journey. This could include what is working well, your appreciation of mental health professionals or specific treatment approaches,

or what could be improved upon.

You can provide feedback using client experience questionnaires or feedback boxes, where available, or by speaking directly to AMH clinic staff.

As well, the AHS Patient Relations department provides another opportunity to share

your feedback related to your experiences, whether providing your recommendations or recognition related to a particular service. You can contact Patient Relations at [ahs.ca/patientfeedback](http://ahs.ca/patientfeedback) or 1-855-550-2555.

If you have a concern about your care you can take the following steps:

1

**STEP**  
Talk to your mental health professional

This provides an opportunity to work together to find a resolution. Expressing concerns can be challenging, but can be very helpful for

everyone involved. We ask that you to be open with your AMH clinic care team about any issues.

2

**STEP**  
Talk to a clinical supervisor

If you and your mental health professional aren't able to find a solution, ask to include a clinical supervisor. Your mental health professional will provide you with the clinical

supervisor's contact information so you can contact them directly. Another option is to contact the AMH clinic manager.

3

**STEP**  
Contact Patient Relations

If the steps above have not resolved your concerns, you can contact Patient Relations at

[ahs.ca/patientfeedback](http://ahs.ca/patientfeedback) or 1-855-550-2555.

We recognize the importance of fit between client and mental health professional. Therefore, there may be times when a clinical supervisor would consider a care transfer.

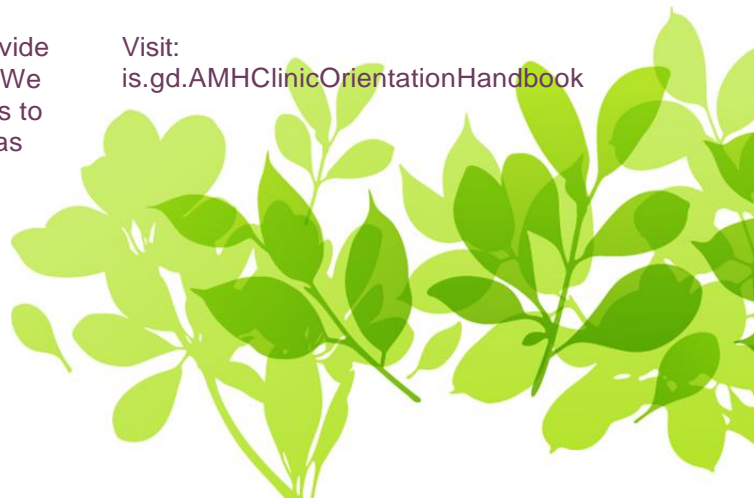
## Conclusion

We hope this orientation handbook has provided you with valuable information and assists you in better understanding what an AMH clinic can offer. If you have additional questions, a mental health professional at your AMH clinic can help. Refer to the contact details for your specific AMH clinic, provided in the service welcome letter.



The goal of this Client Orientation Handbook is to provide useful information to those referred to an AMH clinic. We would appreciate it if you can take a couple of minutes to complete this online survey. Tell us if this resource was helpful or if you have unanswered questions.

Visit: [is.gd.AMHClinicOrientationHandbook](http://is.gd.AMHClinicOrientationHandbook)



## Supports available

### Emergencies

Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department (24/7)

### Health Advice

Call Health Link at 811 (24/7)

### Addiction Help Line

1-866-332-2322 (24/7)

### Mental Health Help Line

1-877-303-2642 (24/7)

### First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line

1-855-242-3310 (24/7)

### Calgary Distress Centre

1-403-266-HELP (4357) or chat / text at [distresscentre.com](http://distresscentre.com)

➤ For additional addiction and mental health information or resources visit [ahs.ca/amh](http://ahs.ca/amh)

