

# Taking the next steps

A handbook to guide your  
child's next steps in their  
mental health journey

This handbook is for parents  
of children or youth enrolled  
in a substance use or mental  
health service and who are  
moving to another service or  
back to their family doctor.



# What to expect next

You and your child have taken important steps to improve their health. Treatment has offered information and skills to use in day-to-day life. This handbook will help you and your child move to the next stage of their healthcare journey and to stay well.

In addition to using the information and skills provided in treatment, here is what you can expect next:



## Review the discharge summary

You and your child's family doctor will receive a discharge summary unless you have asked the care team not to send it. It outlines the treatment received and the plan made together with the care team.

➤ Visit [ahs.ca/findadoctor](https://ahs.ca/findadoctor) if your child needs a family physician.



## Follow-up with your child's family doctor

Review the discharge summary together. If medication is a part of your child's treatment, schedule an appointment as soon as possible to review their medication needs and schedule refills.

➤ If your child's family doctor would like to consult with a psychiatrist, they can access Specialist Link or seek advice through eReferral.



## Review resources

Look back at the resources you received for helpful reminders.



## Share information

Provide others involved in your child's life with helpful information and resources. This may include family members, childcare providers, or school staff.



## Spend time building healthy habits

Invest time in the foundations of mental health such as exercise, nutrition, sleep, connection & fun, and meaning & purpose. Be mindful of your child's social media use and how it may impact these healthy habits.

➤ For more information about building healthy habits visit [myhealth.alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca). Search for *Healthy Habits for Kids*

# Supporting your child

Parents who have been where you are now have told us what helped them during this time. Here are some ideas.

- Acknowledge what your child has tried and learned so far.
- Talk about mental health as a journey, with expected ups and downs.
- Notice when your child uses their skills and show appreciation for their efforts.
- Check-in often.
- Regularly talk about their strengths, things they look forward to, and are hopeful for.
- Highlight positive changes.
- Answer questions as best you can - sometimes the answer might be “I don’t know” and that is okay.
- Offer reassurance.

Here are a few encouraging words provided by parents and caregivers:

*This is a journey for your child and a journey for you. There will be ups and downs. You can weather it together.*

*Think of at least one positive thing about your child every night before you go to bed.*

*Focus on your child’s strengths and resilience.*



# Taking care of yourself

When a child accesses healthcare services it often requires extra energy from parents or caregivers and impacts the whole family. While taking care of others, it is important to take care of yourself. Here are some ideas to support your well-being.



Talk to friends and family. Seek out a support group or professional help to meet your needs.



Schedule time for you and stick with it, as much as possible.



Reflect on what helps you manage stress and what brings you pleasure. When possible, regularly incorporate these into your day or week. Small things can have a big impact.



Build in healthy habits. Sometimes when demands are high only one area at a time can get our attention. Celebrate your efforts.



Be as kind and compassionate to yourself as you are to others. Speak to yourself as you would speak to a close friend.

➤ For more information visit [myhealth.alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca)

Search for *Taking Care of Yourself When You Have a Child with Physical, Emotional, or Behavioural Problems* or *Support Groups and Social Support*

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## Share feedback

Feedback helps Alberta Health Services hear about positive experiences and identify improvements. Speak directly to your child's healthcare provider, use a feedback box, or fill out a survey. Ask what feedback options are available to you.

The Patient Relations department also welcomes comments, concerns, and compliments. Visit [ahs.ca/patientfeedback](https://ahs.ca/patientfeedback) or call 1-855-550-2555.

# What if help is needed again?

Healthcare needs can change as your child grows or as they experience new life events. There are many options and services to meet their needs. Reach out again if you need support.

If your child was last cared for **within a clinic** and you want to review their current needs, explore returning to the clinic, and/or review new service options, contact:

- your previous service if it has been **less than six months** since the last appointment your child attended, or
- Access Mental Health if it has been **more than six months** since the last appointment your child attended.

## Access Mental Health

Information and navigation support, including central access for addiction and mental health services in the Calgary Zone.

Visit: [ahs.ca/accessmh](https://ahs.ca/accessmh) or call 403-943-1500 / 1-844-943-1500  
View the *Know Your Options* brochure listing local walk-in supports, help lines and urgent supports.

Other options available to you and your child include their family physician, employee and family assistance programs (EFAP), and 211 (community and social services help line).

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

➤ **Health advice**  
Call Health Link at 811 (24/7)

# Crisis supports

## Emergencies

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

## 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](https://distresscentre.com) or [calgaryconnecteen.com](https://calgaryconnecteen.com)

