



# CLIENT HANDBOOK

CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre  
101-1208 Wharf Street  
Victoria BC  
V8W 3B9  
P. 250.385.6111 | F. 250.386.8111

# CONTACT

Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling  
Centre  
101-1208 Wharf Street  
Victoria BC  
V8W 3B9  
Main P. 250.385.6111 | F. 250.386.8111

Victoria Child and Youth Advocacy Centre  
CYAC P. 250.634.3923

[www.vcapcc.com](http://www.vcapcc.com)

Hours of operation:  
Monday - Friday 9am - 12pm and 1pm - 5pm

For referrals to the counselling programs call  
the main line and ask to speak to the Intake  
Counsellor.

For referrals to the Victim Assistance Program call  
the main line and ask to speak to a Victim Service  
Worker.

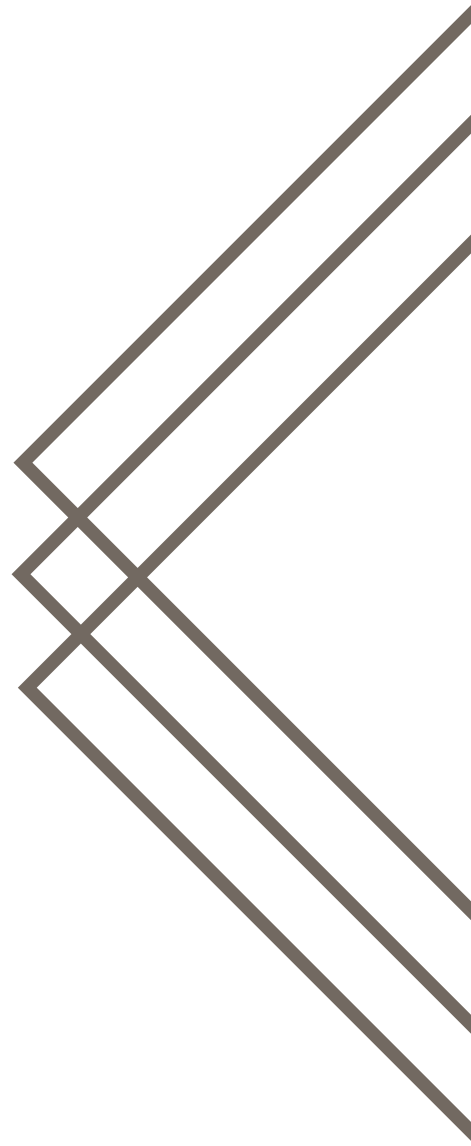
For referrals or questions regarding the Victoria  
Child and Youth Advocacy Centre call the CYAC  
phone.

The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and  
Counselling Centre is not an emergency service.

For after-hours emergency or crisis support please  
call:

Local Police at 911

Vancouver Island Crisis Line: 1.888.494.3888



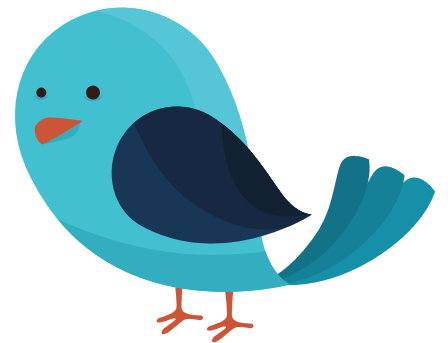
# About Us

The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre provides counselling, support, education, and victim services to children, youth, families, and communities impacted by trauma, abuse, and violence.

The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre offers a variety of services for children, youth, and families as well as community education and prevention initiatives. Services offered include: Sexual Abuse Intervention Program, Child and Youth Trauma Counselling Program, Youth with Sexual Behaviour Problems Program, Victim Assistance Program, as well as the Victoria Child and Youth Advocacy Centre.

Our team works and provides services on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples on the traditional lands of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations across the Greater Victoria Area, including Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tsartlip, Malahat, Scia'new, T'Souke, Esquimalt, and Songhees territories. Our team acknowledges the land and traditional territories of these nations. It is our honour to work and provide support on the land of the Coast Salish, Lekwungen, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Diitidaht peoples.

We strive to be a welcoming and respectful environment for all individuals and families. We work towards removing barriers to services and providing support that is appropriate and respectful of diversity. Our centres provide services to all children, youth, and families who have been impacted by abuse, trauma, or violence inclusive of individuals of all diverse abilities, bodies, races, ethnicities, cultures, genders, sexualities, orientations, identities, religions, and spiritualities.



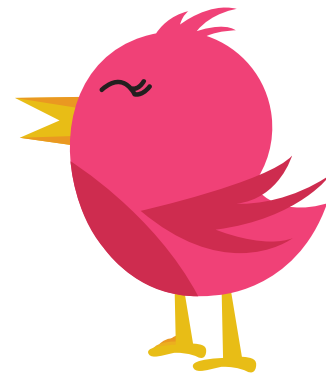
# Mission and Vision

The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre responds to children, youth, and families affected by sexual abuse and other trauma by providing victim services, court preparation and support, counselling, prevention and education in the Greater Victoria community and consultation throughout the province of British Columbia.

*Our vision is a safe and healthy community for children and families.*

# Our Philosophy

- Children and families have the capacity to heal when appropriately supported
- Children and families hurt by the crime of child abuse have the right to receive help and recover from their hurt
- Child abuse is not just an individual problem but social problem
- The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre can help children, youth, and their families in the healing process
- Strength-based and trauma-informed services and supports are important to helping children, youth, and families heal



# What We Offer:

## **Child and Youth Counselling Programs:**

Individual and group counselling is available for children and youth under 19 years old. All service is voluntary and confidential. Children and youth may be eligible for one of two counselling programs based on need, either: Sexual Abuse Intervention Program or Child and Youth Trauma Counselling Program. See details on pages 11-12.

## **Victim Assistance Program:**

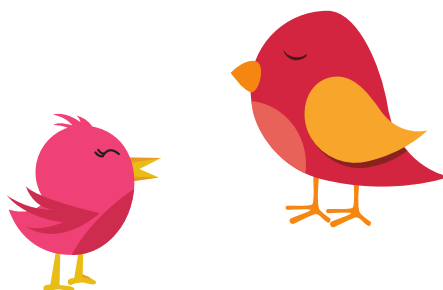
Victim Services is available for children and youth under 19 years old and their caregivers who have been impacted by crime. Service is voluntary. Victim Services is a central aspect of services provided at the Victoria Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. See details on pages 13-14.

## **Child and Youth Advocacy Centre:**

The Child and Youth Advocacy Centre provides safe, welcoming, child-friendly, and trauma-informed environment for children and youth to access the justice system in cases of suspected child abuse. See details on page 15.

## **Youth with Sexual Behaviour Problems:**

Individual counselling is available for youth 12 - 18 years old with sexual behaviour problems. Details about this program can be found in the *Youth with Sexual Behaviour Problems Program Handbook*.



# About Our Program

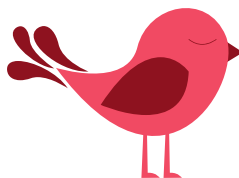
## Staff

All of our program staff have specialized education and at least 2-5 years of experience working with children, youth and families impacted by abuse and violence.

Our Victim Service Workers have an undergraduate degree from a recognized university program in a human services related field, including social work and child and youth care.

Our Counselling team have Master's degrees or equivalent education in counselling, child and youth care, or a related field. All of our counsellors use a client-centered approach and are trained in trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy. Each counsellor brings their own unique practice and training to their role including: Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), Somatic Experiencing, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, Radically-Open Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, Art Therapy, Yoga Therapy, Expressive Therapies.

Each year, the centre provides practicum internship placements for qualified applicants. Counselling internships allow graduate students pursuing master's degrees in counselling related fields to receive supervised training and experience in the counselling role. Victim Services internships allow undergraduate level students to gain valuable experience in a victim service role. All interns are supervised by a program staff and are required to follow all agency policies and procedures. Receiving service from an intern is optional.



# Safety

*The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre and all of its programs offer a safe, respectful environment for all clients and staff.*

Both clients and program staff have specific responsibilities to ensure that everyone who is accessing the centre's programs can feel safe and respected.

Clients have rights and responsibilities (see page 9) and program staff adhere to a Code of Ethics (see page 8).

All clients and staff must abide by centre's policies to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all who access the centre and its programs:

- The centre and all services are non-smoking.
- All persons accessing service must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- No weapons of any kind are permitted in any program of the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre. Police will immediately be informed of the presence of any weapons.
- Any violent or dangerous behaviour will not be accepted. Those engaging in this behaviour will be asked to leave and if necessary the police will be called.

Violent and disruptive behaviour is not accepted in any of the programs. The centre does not use restraint or seclusion when a client is disruptive; program staff will take steps to help the disruptive client before they are asked to leave the centre including safety planning with the client and/or their caregiver. If a client continues to be disruptive or violent they will be asked to leave the centre and the program. Clients who engaged in violent or disruptive behaviour will be consulted and the program staff will plan to determine if the client who engaged in disruptive or violent behaviour can return to services.

# Confidentiality

Your privacy is important to us. All services and programs are confidential. In order to access services, clients and/or their caregivers must sign a Service Agreement agreeing to the services provided and no information about you or the your engagement with services you are receiving will be released without your or your caregiver's informed consent.

If a third party request for information or subpoena for release of the file is received, the Executive Director will determine the legal responsibility of the agency to release the requested information and whether the release of information is in the best interests of the child.

Confidentiality is limited in cases of unreported suspected abuse or neglect under the Duty to Report or if program staff believe that a client and/or caregiver is at risk to hurt themselves or someone else.

## Information Collection and Records

The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre believes the information you contribute to the agency is very important. Your service provider will document your information in a confidential client file. No information from this file is released unless the client provides Informed Consent.

We also obtain information in a variety of ways in order to improve our services to you. These may include:

- Client Satisfaction Questionnaire
- Client and Parent Feedback Forms
- Follow-up around additional service needs when appropriate
- Stakeholders/community satisfaction surveys

*General statistical Information collected by the Centre may be used for billing and reporting as well as evaluation and improvement of services. No identifying information will be released.*



# Code of Ethics

*Program staff are dedicated to providing ethical, client-centred practice. All program staff adhere to the General Code of Ethics to guide their behaviours, practice, and interaction with clients, community, and other program staff.*

## **General Code of Ethics:**

- Regard the well-being of the people they serve as their primary professional obligation
- Carry out their professional duties and obligations with integrity and objectivity.
- Fulfill their obligations and responsibilities to the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre and its funding sources.
- Be competent in the performance of the services and functions they undertake on behalf of the people they serve, being aware of their own limitations and refer out or seek support as required.
- Respect the intrinsic worth of the people they serve in their professional capacity.
- Respect staff member's personal property
- Not exploit the relationship with a person served for personal benefit, gain or gratification
- Not sign or witness for client documents unrelated to direct client care.
- Adhere to the confidentiality policy and not disclose client information except when required or allowed by law to do so, or when clients have consented for disclosure or where the child or youth is at risk and in need of protection.
- Recognize and prevent situations where a conflict of interest may jeopardize their professional judgment.
- Endeavour to promote excellence in their service profession.
- Endeavour to promote the agency service programs, and/or policies in a manner that is consistent with the General Code of Ethics.
- Uphold the Mission of the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre.
- Uphold the Bullying and Harassment Policy to promote a work environment that is characterized by professionalism, collegiality, and harmony.



*All program staff also adhere to their own individual professional code of ethics based on their registration and professional governing body. For example: BC Association of Clinical Counsellors, Code of Ethics for Specialized Victim Assistance Programs, or BC Art Therapy Association. If you have questions about your service provider's code of ethics, you can ask them to direct you to more information.*

# Client Rights and Responsibilities



*As a client of the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre you have important rights and responsibilities.*

## ***Clients have the right to:***

- be safe
- refuse requests or service without having to feel guilty or selfish
- express all of your feelings, positive or negative, as long as you do not violate the rights of others
- have your needs be as important as the needs of other people
- make mistakes and be responsible for them
- have your opinions given the same respect and consideration as others'
- have choice in the service that is provided to you
- say no to anything when you feel you are not ready or it is unsafe for you or it goes against your values
- change your mind
- be independent
- be treated with respect
- to be cooperative and giving and not be taken advantage of
- not to be responsible for others' behaviours, actions, feelings, or problems.
- be in a non-abusive environment
- change and grow
- be able to see your file in a timely manner, if they make a request, as outlined in the Release of Information and Confidentiality Policy for client records and in accordance with B.C.'s Personal Information Protection Act
- make a complaint and receive a timely response as per the agency's Complaints Policy
- provide feedback and evaluate the services received at the Centre
- be informed of access or referral to self-help or other support services
- To review and confirm the Rights of Clients document with their service worker each year when service is extended

## **Client Responsibilities:**

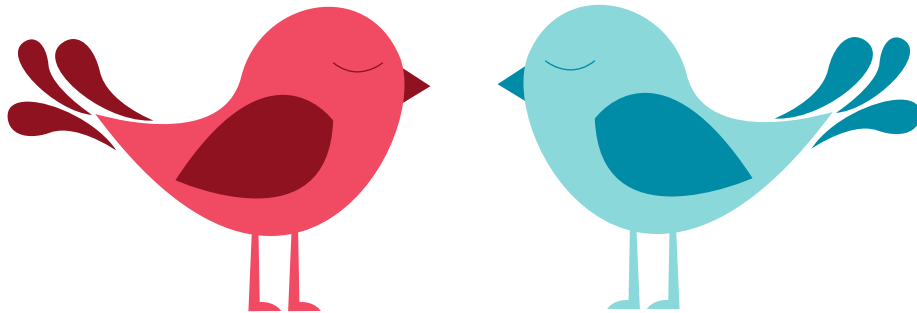
- To treat the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre staff and others receiving service in a safe and respectful manner
- To inform the service provider of anything that may affect their treatment or personal safety
- To respect the confidentiality of others receiving service
- To honour the Centre's environment so as to not be disruptive to others
- To inform the Centre as soon as they can if they need to cancel or change an appointment

# Trauma-Informed Practice

Acknowledging the effects of trauma to provide compassionate, strength-based services.

The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre provides services based on the principles of trauma-informed practice: safety, trust, choice, and control.

All program staff draw on an understanding of the potential impacts of trauma and the intersection of neuroscience and relational practice to develop individualized, collaborative service plans and interventions for all clients of the agency.



# Counselling Programs

Children and youth under age 19 and their family members may be eligible for counselling services, free of charge. Service in all programs is based on voluntary signed service agreement.

## ***Sexual Abuse Intervention Program:***

The Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (or SAIP) is designed for children and youth where sexual abuse or exploitation has been confirmed or is suspected. Services are individualized for each child and family. Services include individual, family, and group counselling supports.

The VCAPCC offers SAIP counselling to children, youth, and families residing in Victoria, Oak Bay, Saanich, Esquimalt, Central Saanich, Sidney and North Saanich.

## ***Child and Youth Trauma Counselling Program:***

The Child and Youth Trauma Counselling program offers individual, family and group counselling for children, youth and families where abuse, trauma, and maltreatment, exposure to violence, or neglect has been confirmed or suspected. The Child and Youth Trauma Counselling program is available to children, youth, and families across the Greater Victoria Area, including Westshore, Sooke, and Metchosin. Availability of this program is funding dependent.

Counsellors in both programs provide education and prevention skills to children and families. The goals of the counselling programs are to reduce the negative effects of abuse, trauma, and maltreatment while fostering resiliency. Counselling is individualized to the needs of each child, youth, and family. While counselling interventions provided focus on emotional, psychological, and behavioural indicators of healing, services also support a child/youth's ability to heal physically, developmentally, culturally, and spiritually.

# COUNSELLING PROGRAMS

## How does counselling work at VCAPCC?



### Referrals

Children, youth, and adults can call or email the Intake Counsellor to make referrals Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm.

If you leave a voicemail or send an email, someone will get back to you in 3 working days.

The Intake Counsellor will take your information over the phone and set-up a time for the next step.



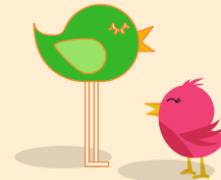
### Intake Screening Assessment

During this part of the process, the Intake Counsellor will talk with you and your caregivers to learn more about why you would like to come to counselling. The intake counsellor asks questions and listens to you to make sure that this is the right place for you to get support and help. The intake counsellor can answer any questions you have about counselling and can help you find other resources if you need.



### Orientation

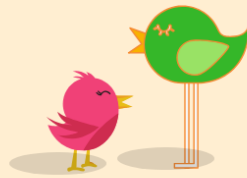
At this appointment you get a tour of the agency and get to learn about where everything is and all of the safety plans and procedures. We want to make sure that you are safe while you are at counselling so it's important to show you around. You can ask questions and see what the counselling offices look like. This is when you will sign the Service Agreement to say that you want to attend counselling here at the centre.



### Meeting your therapist and making goals

For the first few appointments (these are sometimes called sessions), you will meet your therapist and get to know each other. Your therapist will ask you some questions and together you will create a plan and set goals for what you want to work on while you are in counselling. This is called the Clinical Assessment.

Your therapist will have questions for you but you can also ask them questions too!



### Regular Sessions

You will have regular scheduled appointments with your therapist at a time that works best for you and your caregivers. Appointments are 45mins - 1 hr and happen every week while you are in the counselling program.

If you need to miss an appointment, you can let your therapist know.

You and your therapist will check-in regularly to make sure you are working on the goals you want to be in a way that makes sense to you - sometimes that means talking, doing art, or even playing.



### Completing Counselling

When you and your therapist feel that you have met your goals and are ready to end counselling, you will make a transition plan and complete your counselling process. This is sometimes called closing. This is a positive time because it means that you have reached your goals and are feeling better and are ready say good bye to your therapist.

# Victim Assistance Program

Victim Service workers have specialized expertise in supporting children and youth involved with the criminal justice system. Services are available for all child/youth victims and witnesses of violent crimes, abuse, and assault, including family violence and child protection cases.

*Your victim service worker can assist with:*

- Information and support for police interviews, including accompaniment to interviews at police stations and CYAC
- Accompaniment to hospital medical exams related to reported abuse
- Support and information about the criminal justice system
- Court preparation for child and youth witnesses in criminal court cases
- Liaison with police, crown, criminal justice system personnel, and child protection workers
- Court support and accompaniment
- Referrals to community resources including counselling
- Forms and applications for counselling funding such as Crime Victim Assistance Program
- Support registering for Victim Safety Unit and notification
- Information about child and youth rights

*Referrals for Victim Services can be made by any one in the community at any point in your involvement with the Criminal Justice System. Victim Service support is for victims, witnesses, and non-offending caregivers and family members in cases of criminal or suspected criminal offences. Victim Service workers do not provide support for Family Law Cases.*

# VICTIM SERVICES

## How does the Victim Assistance Program work at VCAPCC?



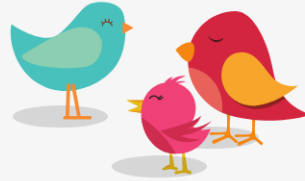
### Referrals

Referrals to the Victim Assistance Program can be made at any time during a child, youth, or family's involvement in the criminal justice system. Sometimes a child, youth or family will be referred to Victim Services before their interview with police or sometimes they are referred after an interview with police.

Children, youth, families, and community professionals can all make referrals to victim services by calling the Victim Service team Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm. The Victim Service worker will take your information over the phone and determine what the next step is, either accompanying you to a police interview or setting up an intake meeting.

### Police Interview

A victim service worker may meet you for the first time at a police interview. Police interviews are arranged through police and can occur at police departments or at the Victoria Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. You, your caregivers, or the police officer in charge of your interview can call a victim service to be present for support and information at your police interview. After your interview, you and your worker will make a plan for the next steps if you want more support.



### Court Preparation and Support

If you are required to go to court, your Victim Service Worker can help you get the information to help you feel ready and supported to go to court if needed. Your Victim Service Worker can plan court preparation meetings with you, can accompany you to Crown meetings, and can go with you to court if you want. They are here to help you all the way through the justice system process and can answer any questions you have about court and your job in court.



### Community Resources and Referrals

Your Victim Service Worker can help you with referrals for community resources, such as counselling and other supports.

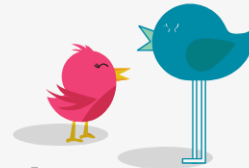


### Intake Meeting

The intake meeting is a chance to meet your victim service worker and for your victim service worker to learn a bit more about you and why you are needing victim service support. Your Victim Service worker will ask you and your caregiver questions and you can ask them questions too. This meeting helps you and your victim service plan what you need support with and how your victim service worker can best help you.

### Follow-up and support

Your Victim Service worker is here to help you with information, support, and resources to help you and your caregivers while you go through the criminal justice system. You can call your Victim Service Worker or set-up appointments as you need for support and follow-up information. If you have questions about your case, the processes, what your role or any other questions about the criminal justice system, your victim service worker is here to help you.



### Applications and Forms

If you are a victim or witness to a crime you may be eligible to apply for the Crime Victim Assistance Program for funding for counselling sessions and other supports. Your victim service worker can help you with this application and can also help you with notification applications, safety planning, and other paperwork associated with your case.

# Victoria Child and Youth Advocacy Centre

*A supportive, child and youth-centred approach to investigations.*

Child and Youth Advocacy Centres (CYACs) are child-focused centres that provide a coordinated approach to cases of reported child abuse. A team of professionals, including law enforcement, victim services, and child protection workers, work together to support children, youth, and caregivers who access the centre to ensure that they feel safe, informed, and supported.

The Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, a program of VCAPCC, provides safe, welcoming, child-friendly, and trauma-informed environment. The Victoria CYAC model is based on the principle that the needs of children and youth should come first when cases of child abuse are investigated and prosecuted. The CYAC connects children, youth, and caregivers with a Victim Service worker immediately who will support them throughout the process.



Advocacy



Victim Services



Forensic Interviews



Multidisciplinary Team Approach



Follow-up



Court Preparation and Support



Support Referrals



Safety Planning



# Prevention and Education

Through collaborative initiatives with schools and other agencies, the Centre is able to provide child abuse prevention and education materials, training, and presentations throughout the Greater Victoria community.

*If you would like more information on any of the programs at the Centre, contact our office by phone or email or check our website or Facebook.*

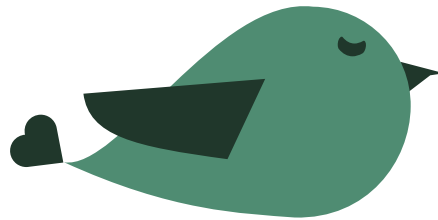
# Family Education and Support Services

The Centre provides education and support groups to parents and caregivers who share similar concerns and experiences, based on the assessment of need. When groups occur, they are designed to strengthen the parent/caregiver and family by providing timely information and support.

When other family members have been affected by abuse, family sessions may occur. Non-offending parent(s) or caregivers involved with counselling will be provided with information and education about progress to assist them in supporting their child. If the child or youth has signed for their own treatment, program staff will ask for the signing client's consent before consulting with others.

# Feedback, Concerns, and Complaints

The Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre is dedicated to providing the highest quality services to children, youth and families. At the end of all counselling and victim services programs, all clients and involved caregivers will have the opportunity to completed feedback surveys.



*Any concerns or complaints that a client has about their service and the Centre are important to the agency and the agency wants to know about them. They help the agency to examine and improve services. If a client tells the agency about any complaints or concerns they have, the client will not experience any negative consequences from the agency for letting the agency and service providers know. Please see Complaints Procedure on the following page (page 18).*

# Complaint Procedure

**Step 1:** Tell your Victim Service worker or counsellor about your complaint. If you are not comfortable telling your worker directly, move to step 2.

**Step 2:** Call the main office line (250) 385 - 6111 and ask to speak to the manager of the program your concern/complaint is regarding. For concerns about the counselling programs (SAIP and OFT) contact the Manager of Practice. For concerns about the Victim Assistance Program or Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, contact the CYAC Manager. The respective manager will set up a meeting with you to talk about your concerns within 14 working days of your first contact with them.

**Step 3:** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of steps 1 and 2, contact the Executive Director at (250) 385-6111. The Executive Director will set up a meeting with you to talk about your concern within 14 working days.

**Step 4:** If you do not agree with the steps taken by the Executive Director to fix your concerns, you may contact the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Centre's Board of Directors. This step must be done in a letter addressed to the Board at the Centre's mailing address. The Board members will discuss your letter at their next meeting and inform you in writing of their decision within 14 days of the Board meeting.



*Helping Children Heal*