



Changes to Child and Youth Counselling Services

Q&A: 2023-24 school year



There are changes coming to the Northwest Territories (NWT) Child and Youth Counselling (CYC) services. This program provides mental health and wellness supports to students, as well as school-aged youth and their families, in schools and communities.

These changes are an effort to **improve** these services. While students and families may see changes as CYC services go through this remodel, mental health services **will be available** in schools and communities during the 2023-24 school year.

The CYC initiative launched in the 2018-19 school year and rolled out to include all NWT schools. Through the initiative, child and youth counsellors hired by the NWT health and social services authorities were placed in schools and communities that had more than 75 students (37 schools), and a travelling mental health support team provided service to schools with fewer than 75 students (12 schools).

What are the changes in schools?

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, NWT schools will offer their *own* school-based mental health and wellness services. These changes will take time, and will not happen immediately.

These services will be tailored to the local community and schools' unique needs and culture, such as Indigenous teachings and practices rooted in the land, language and spirituality of the region.

Mental health and wellness services in schools will be provided for students with mild to moderate needs. Many of these services aim to promote positive mental health and wellness in students, and provide them with tools and strategies to prevent significant mental health concerns, such as self-help tools, workshops and class presentations on things like anger management and dealing with anxiety.

What services are available through the Health and Social Services system?

The NWT health and social services authorities will continue to provide clinical counselling services to children and youth, including one-on-one therapy and family therapy. They will also help students and families navigate services, such as psychiatry, specialized treatment and addictions support. Students and families will access Child and Youth Counselling services through their local [Community Counselling Program](#).

Will all NWT schools have the same services?

No, mental health and wellness services may look different in every region and even in every school. Each education body will receive funding for mental health and wellness services and decide how services will be delivered. They will make sure students continue to have access to mental health supports.

Will there still be one-on-one counselling in schools?

No, not in schools. Now Child and Youth Counsellors will provide clinical counselling services for children and youth, including one-on-one counselling and family therapy, through the local [Community Counselling Program](#).

Will my school's CYC still be available?

It depends on the school and region. Every education body will manage their own mental health and wellness services for their schools and these will look different across the NWT. Schools will be in touch with families and students about the services available at each school once they're finalized. In some cases, the CYC that was at a school may still be available through the Community Counselling Program, and there is no referral needed. Please visit this link for more information on contacting a CYC in your community:

www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/contact/community-counsellor

Why is the NWT government changing CYC services?

Over the years, concerns were raised about challenges with CYC services in schools, such as recruiting and retaining staff, and a lack of intervention and prevention supports for children and youth. The remodel addresses these challenges and allows us to continue a team approach to mental health and wellness through both the education and health and social services systems, which provides wraparound supports to children and youth.

Will school-based providers be available during the summer and breaks?

It depends on the school and region. Like most school services, there may be a pause during breaks; however, schools will clearly communicate what services are available during breaks. Your school can provide more details. Counselling services for children and youth offered through the Community Counselling Program will continue to be available year-round.

Who can I talk to about mental health supports for a student or youth?

Parents/guardians and students can talk to their teacher or school principal about the services the school can provide, or their primary care provider (i.e., family doctor or community nurse), or [their local Community Counselling Program](#) for services provide outside of the school.

You can also find more supports here: www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/mental-wellness-and-addictions-recovery/facility-based-addictions-treatment.

More information

Department of Education, Culture and Employment | Email: ecepublicaffairs@gov.nt.ca |

Website: www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/cyc-services
