

Welcome to Blue Hills Child and Family Centre

We hope that your experience with Blue Hills will be helpful and rewarding. This handbook gives you a brief description of our services, as well as important information about working with you and your family.

At Blue Hills, we care a lot about children's mental health and wellbeing. This caring comes from the privilege of supporting many families over the years.

We've learned that:

- All parents want the best for their children.
- All families are resourceful.
- Families go through a lot when they try to find professional help.
- Parents become more confident and capable when their family is supported.

“Nothing about us, without us”

Blue Hills is committed to family-centered and family-directed services. We believe that all families have the capacity to grow, learn and change. We are committed to collaborative partnerships with families, highlighting the importance of bringing family voice and choice into the center of all our work together. At Blue Hills, families truly experience “nothing about us without us”.

We believe that:

- The child and family are at the center of every decision;
- The child and family are experts on their own needs and values;
- The child and family are active participants and partners in the decision making about their work with us;
- The child and family's voice/opinion and choices are what guide our efforts;
- The collaborative partnership between the family and the worker is based on mutual respect.

Who are we?

Founded in 1969, Blue Hills Child and Family Centre is a not-for-profit accredited children's mental health centre funded primarily by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

We have specialized experience in responding to the social, emotional and behavioural challenges of York Region children, youth, and their families.

We are located at two primary sites – Aurora and Richmond Hill. We also have satellite offices in Maple and Markham. In our efforts to be responsive to family's needs and schedules, therapeutic work occurs in various locations.

Families are faced with many complex challenges. To support families, Blue Hills has access to various disciplines, providing services that best meets the needs of children, youth and families. Our staff have a variety of educational backgrounds, experience, and expertise, including social workers, child and youth workers, early childhood educators and other mental health professionals. In addition, we also have consultants in the areas of psychology, speech and language, family systems and psychiatry.

Vision, mission and values

All that we do here at Blue Hills is guided by our vision, mission and values. We believe we are accountable to maintain and live out our values in each and every interaction.

VISION:

Blue Hills Child and Family Centre envisions healthy and resilient children and families.

MISSION:

In the spirit of collaboration and respectful partnerships with both families and the community, we strive to create opportunities for children and families to nurture their relationships and expand their abilities in realizing improved mental health.

VALUES:

The values of Blue Hills reflect the philosophy and beliefs of our organization, guiding all our decisions and actions. In our organization we undertake through our actions to promote a climate of trust and harmony in all our endeavours.

Inclusivity: We recognize and uphold the principle of equality of access to services which are responsive and sensitive to individual's uniqueness.

Integrity: We are dedicated to and adhere to maintaining a high moral standard by making certain our actions always match our words.

Ethical Practice: Ethical practice is to honor the beliefs, morals and values of one's profession and to help others through the process of unbiased decision making

Strength-based Practice: We believe families have strengths and resources for their own empowerment and are dedicated to collaboratively engaging with families in ways that are respectful and values them as a partner in setting their own goals to becoming successful.

Transparent Practices: We believe strongly in using principles of transparent practice in our work, to clearly and openly share what we do, to encourage accountability and enable people to learn from our successes and mistakes.

Self-Reflective Practice: We are dedicated to a process of self-evaluation that pays attention to the practical values and theories which inform our everyday actions in order to support continuous learning and ongoing enhancement of our work.

Blue Hills Services and Programs

Blue Hills provides **assessment** and **treatment** for children, teens, and families within York Region.

Assessment means we try to understand each family's experiences and challenges by finding out what is going on. We do that by talking with you and your family, by using various tools that have been designed to help us understand the challenges that you are sharing with us, and with your permission, we talk with other service providers or supports you have been involved in and are currently connected to. Assessment is a collaborative process where we will work together, as partners, in developing a shared understanding of what might be going on.

Treatment means the things we do to help your child and family. Blue Hills provides individual, family, play and group therapy. Each of Blue Hills' unique programs have a focus, and each meets many different needs. Blue Hills works closely with families regardless of the origin of the problem/challenge, and regardless of whether the challenge is considered an "individual" or "family" issue. We know that involving families in solutions is often beneficial.

Here's what we offer and how you can access specific services:

Clinical Navigation

Many families beginning their work with Blue Hills will be invited to meet with a Clinical Navigator. The Navigator supports the family in developing an initial plan to respond to their unique needs. The Clinical Navigator will assist the family in accessing services at Blue Hills, and in their community, as a way to begin to address some of their goals for themselves and their child. Together with the Clinical Navigator, you will map out your vision for your family and the related services that help.

Workshops and Group Programs

Staff facilitators offer opportunities for parents, children and/or youth to learn about and discuss common challenges like anxiety, challenging behaviour, and how to create meaningful family time.

Brief Therapy

Brief therapy offers an opportunity to quickly access therapeutic supports to work on a particular area of concern. We work with your family over a short period of time,

moving forward with different ways of looking at struggles. We offer some concrete methods and strategies to try in your daily life together.

Counselling

When it has been identified that you and your family could benefit from more on-going goal focused counselling and therapy, you and a clinical worker will co-develop a treatment plan that includes a shared understanding of the needs and challenges as well as the identification of your resources and strengths. This shared understanding will build on your vision for your family and feed into developing clear, measurable, and attainable goals. This allows for consistent tracking of the work together that monitors positive shifts, no matter how small. Counselling seeks to uncover an understanding of how much service is meaningful at this moment in time, and what other community supports and resources may support continued gains.

Play Therapy

Play therapy involves using creative and playful ways for children to begin to sort out their feelings and begin to feel better about things. Play therapy involves many elements - including games, challenges, activities and art. This variety of methods makes it easier for children to understand and share thoughts about themselves, school, other kids and experiences.

Intensive Services

Staff work with families at times of significant distress, and heightened levels of crisis, requiring a more concentrated level of service. The program differs from counselling. There are more sessions over a shorter period of time in order to support stabilization of a child/youth and family. Multiple sessions may occur each week, focusing on building coping skills, and increasing the overall functioning of the family. Once this stabilization occurs, (typically through a three month period), a transition to other supports and services may be necessary and will be supported by the clinician.

Respite Services

The Children's Respite Service is a time-limited service which has been designed to offer relief to a family or caregiver who is temporarily overwhelmed with caring for a child or youth with moderate to severe social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is a supportive intervention offering a planned short break with the child in order to preserve and support the existing home placement and the family's treatment plan.

Consultation and Assessment

Your Clinical Navigator and/or Clinical Worker may engage in a conversation with you regarding the value of specialized consultation and assessment to support the understanding of the factors at play for your child and family, as well as where and how to access services both here and in the wider community.

Blue Hills also offers other services such as Family Mediation, Alternative Dispute Resolution, COMPASS (School based services), Day Treatment and Residential

treatment. If you would like to know more, please ask your clinical worker for more information.

Making the call

Each family's experience with Blue Hills programs and services will be different; it depends on the supports your family needs. Here are the typical first steps in your journey:

- Most families first reach out to us by calling our Intake/Screening Department through our main phone number (905) 773-4323.
- Blue Hills' Intake/Screening staff will listen to your concerns and hopes for services. We will collect information that you feel is important for us to best understand and describe your situation.
- When families can be better served by another service in the community, the Intake/Screening provides direct assistance to link them with those services.
- When it seems that Blue Hills can provide the best support, a series of questions help guide the family member calling and the Intake/Screening to see what areas are of greatest concern and supports consideration for which service may be a good fit.

Meeting with your “worker”

When you first meet with a clinical worker face to face, all of the material in this handbook will be reviewed with you, and we will take the time to discuss:

- your hopes for service and review recommended services for you and your family;
- the possible benefits and risks to receiving services from Blue Hills;
- any special needs or considerations that you would like us to accommodate; and
- any other questions that you might have.

The rights of families at Blue Hills

Children/youth and families have a right to:

- Confidentiality (unless the child/youth is at risk);
- Participate meaningfully as a full partner in all aspects of your child and family's involvement, this will include identifying your needs, assisting with choosing and implementing strategies to achieve your goals, and helping to measure the outcomes;
- Receive respect and consideration in the treatment process;
- An accessible, safe and secure service environment at Blue Hills;
- To receive services in a format suitable to your communication needs;
- Be confident in the knowledge, skills and qualifications of the professionals involved with you;

- Have the client/service provider relationship clearly defined;
- Understand the risks and benefits of the treatment process;
- Be informed about any alternatives to the services being offered;
- Be made aware of the complaint procedure;
- Provide feedback to the service provider on the impact of the treatment process;
- To withdraw from service at any time and be informed of any possible implications; and
- Have access to your file (some restrictions may apply).

Parents and Guardians for children under the age of 12 have a right to:

- Be an active participant in all aspects of determining which services would best meet you and your family's needs;
- Be informed of all medical emergencies regarding their child/youth; and
- Be advised of the child/youth's rights and responsibilities and the complaint procedure.

What will we ask of you?

- To participate in the treatment process and the development of treatment goals, and to be as open and honest as possible in your communication;
- To collaborate with your worker in selecting the right mental health service for you and your family;
- To share with your worker if you do not understand something during the process of treatment;
- Attend scheduled meetings and appointments. Sessions may include all family members, children/youth alone and/or parents and could be family, individual, play and/or group therapy, or couples counselling, or other services;
- To notify the appropriate individual(s) in a timely manner if you are unable to attend sessions;
- To respect the staff, other participants in service, and property of Blue Hills;
- To allow Blue Hills Child and Family Centre access to information from community sources, i.e. hospitals, doctors, and/or other professionals that may help in the formulation of the treatment plan; and
- To provide Blue Hills with any information about your child and family that will improve healthy family functioning.

What can you expect from us?

- To partner and be accountable to you about what would be most helpful for you and your family;
- To provide for the physical and emotional care of your child/youth as needed while he/she is in treatment;
- To have contact with your child/youth's teacher and school providing support or consultation when it is appropriate;

- To make contact with other community agencies who can contribute information about your child/youth;
- To ensure you are part of meetings that support planning for your child/youth and family (at Blue Hills, school or community agencies)
- To conduct ourselves within the realm of the Child and Family Services Act and legal responsibilities. This includes our obligation to inform the Children's Aid Society in cases of suspected abuse or neglect, and to contact the appropriate law or medical authorities where warranted;
- To conduct ourselves in a manner respectful of your family's values and diversity; and
- To commit to York Region's Character Community attributes in our day to day interactions.

Blue Hills' policies and practices are in full compliance with AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act). If you are a person with a disability, please let us know if you need accessible services. It is our goal to remove or reduce barriers and to treat people equally. We will work with you to find ways to allow you to use and benefit from our services in an equal and respectful manner.

Please contact us or leave a comment or suggestion in the designated area in our reception areas to clarify how we can assist.

What does Blue Hills do with your information?

Blue Hills understands the importance of treating your personal information with respect and sensitivity. This means that in all aspects of our work with you, the privacy of what we collect, how we use it, how we store it and how we share it is just as important to us as it is to you.

We collect personal and health information that could include: Name, Address, Date of Birth, and Health card information (if collected). To help us provide the best kinds of services, we may also collect information on your family background and history. Your personal information could be used to:

- Offer the best kind of service;
- Get some feedback from you on the quality of the service you received;
- Help us meet all legal and other regulatory requirements;
- Contact you about upcoming community events, workshops, or other programs that you might be interested in;
- Contact you about volunteering.

Blue Hills does not share any information about you with anyone outside of Blue Hills and our associates (e.g. consultants, lawyers, accreditors) without your consent. We may need to share your information with other professionals, including doctors, schools, or other agencies and programs that you are involved with. We will do this only with your consent. This consent must be given by a parent/guardian of a child who is under the age of 12, or by the child/youth if he or she is 12 or older.

There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. All of the following situations require, by law, that we inform the proper authorities if we have knowledge that there is an intention to commit a crime which may cause harm to yourself or another person; that a family member is in danger of harming someone or of being harmed; that there is suspicion of child abuse or a child in need of protection; that there is a directive through the courts to provide information, through subpoena, search warrant or other legal order.

Your personal information is kept either in hard copy (paper) file or in computer files, or both. Client files are never destroyed. We keep them in a secure storage area. Only those who are authorized to have access to these files see your information. The files are protected by both physical and electronic security measures.

All staff, associates, volunteers, members of the Board of Directors, and others associated with Blue Hills are bound by an oath of confidentiality. They take this oath when they first become involved with Blue Hills. Rigorous systems have been established to ensure information is maintained in a confidential manner. Should there be a breach, procedures are in place to inform you.

Sometimes Blue Hills uses “non-identifying” information to help us evaluate our programs, ensure quality of service (including Accreditation), and ensure compliance with legal and government regulations. This means that we use general information about the people who use services here, but in a way that does not identify you or your family.

When you and your clinical worker and /or Program staff think it makes sense, we will seek your consent to work in partnership with other community service providers, like school teams, or family health teams, that work with you. We will do this in a way that respects your privacy. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

What is a clinical file?

As soon as your child is referred to Blue Hills an electronic record and a clinical file are opened. This clinical file is a record of our involvement with your child and family. The clinical file helps in organizing, guiding and summarizing our partnership. It assures effective communication with internal staff and professionals. The record ensures accountability to you, to the agency, to the funding sources and to the professional community.

The contents of a clinical file includes:

- Basic demographic information about you, your family and/or your child.
- The permission forms, consents and any correspondence.
- The information about the family and the “work” and services that you have engaged in.
- Any specialized assessments are also a part of the clinical record.

As a client at Blue Hills, you have the right to access your personal information. You have the right to correct your information if it is shown to be wrong or inaccurate. We

will depend on you to let us know if there are any changes to your personal information, such as your address or phone number. We will make these changes as soon as possible after you tell us about them.

During the course of your service with Blue Hills, we will provide you with copies of important reports and documents upon. You may also request access to your information by making a written request to your case coordinator, to their Supervisor/Manager or to the Blue Hills' Privacy Officer.

Depending on the kind of request and the amount of information you ask for, you may be required to pay an administrative fee to cover related costs.

E-mail, texting and social media

In some situations, you and your clinical worker may wish to use e-mail to communicate. There are both benefits and risks when using e-mail, particularly with respect to confidentiality. If you wish to use e-mail, we need your informed consent, knowing that:

- we will not provide counseling or treatment using e-mail;
- we will not send reports through e-mail;
- we will only check e-mail during working hours; and
- we handle email communication in keeping with our confidentiality policies, however we cannot guarantee that e-mail communication will be confidential.

Text messaging is used only with your informed consent and only for the purpose of confirming appointment times.

Blue Hills does not permit staff to accept Friend or Contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site. This is because doing so can compromise confidentiality and privacy, and blurs the boundaries of the counsellor/client professional relationship. It is a different kind of relationship, and needs to be treated that way if it is to be useful to you and your family.

Steps for resolving issues or concerns

Your thoughts, concerns and feedback are important to us. Blue Hills Child and Family Centre wants to provide the best possible service to children, youth and families. But sometimes you may find you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving or think something needs to change.

If so, we encourage you to talk to someone about this. To help with this, we have developed some steps for you to follow to deal with your concern/complaint. A brochure outlining the process is available at Reception and accompanies this booklet.

If possible, your complaint should be put in writing so that it will be clearly understood however, this is not a requirement.

Here is how you can pursue a resolution:

1. Go directly to the person with whom you are having the issue. If you are unable to work it out, then...
2. Go to your case coordinator/clinician and talk to them; they will try to help you to resolve the issue. Most likely things can be worked out, if not then...
3. Go to one of the Supervisors or Managers. Your case coordinator/ clinician can help you make an appointment to speak with the appropriate Supervisor or Manager. If it has not been resolved after you speak with the Supervisor/Manager, then...
4. Ask to speak to the Director of Programs and Services or the Executive Director.

If you have a complaint but are not a client of Blue Hills, it is hoped that you would address your concern directly with the appropriate individual or their supervisor. Should the concern apply to someone other than the staff, please go directly to Step 3.

The following step applies only for the children living in Blue Hills' residence:

If you do not feel that it was resolved with the Executive Director, you may submit in writing your concern to the Central Regional Office of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Staff will provide you with the necessary assistance in order to do this.

There is also a Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth who will try to help if you ever feel that you need to complain about services. They can be reached at 1-800-263-2841, or through advocacy@provincialadvocate.on.ca.

Meeting the needs of our diverse community

Blue Hills is committed to providing services in both of Ontario's official languages. All Blue Hills services are offered in English, and many Blue Hills services are offered in French. If you speak another language, we will try and find a way to meet your needs using translation services.

We will make every effort to accommodate the uniqueness of each child, youth and family who seeks our service and to make our services and resources accessible. Please don't hesitate to tell us how to be helpful to you!

When a crisis arises

If you or your family is in a crisis or emergency situation, we encourage you to call the following services for help or assistance:

- If someone is at imminent risk of suicide or physical harm call 911 for immediate assistance or take the person to your local hospital emergency department.
- During office hours, you can call your clinical worker at Blue Hills. If your clinical worker is not available, the receptionist will direct your call to another worker or supervisor.

- You can also access 310-COPE.
- Here are a few more numbers that might be helpful to you:
 - Tele health Phone 1-866-797-0000
 - Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
 - Mental Health Helpline 1-866-531-2600

Your feedback is helpful

We look forward to working with your family. We value your opinions about our partnership and the services we provide. We will be asking you to comment on your experience with our services at various times. Offering us your input (compliments or concerns) in a timely way helps us understand what is working well for your child and family, and what changes we might make to improve our services.

Opportunities for you to be involved

If you would like to provide support and/or input into the work of Blue Hills please let your clinical worker or anyone at Blue Hills know. Your input helps us improve our services, and will help make sure that we are providing you the right services for you and your family. We promote parent involvement as volunteers, mentors, participants for focus groups, service evaluation, etc. and appreciate your expressions of interest in such activities.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

By Mail: 402 Bloomington Road | Aurora, ON | L4G 0L9 or

10350 Yonge Street, Fourth Floor | Richmond Hill ON | L4C 5K9

By Phone: 905.773.4323 | 1.866.436.7608

By Fax: 905.773-8133

By email: bluehills@bluehillscentre.ca

Refer to our Web site: www.bluehillscentre.ca

