



Housing

Mental Health

Employment Services



Safe Haven Youth Services

Client Handbook

What to expect and your rights as a client of Starling Community Services

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
What to Expect from Safe Haven Youth Services	4
Building Security and Video Surveillance.....	5
Orientation to Discipline.....	6
Service Agreement	7
What We Mean by "Voluntary Service"	7
Privacy Policy.....	8
Rights and Responsibilities	13
Risks and Benefits of Participation	15
Client Complaints Process	16
Community Advisory Committee	16

Introduction

Safe Haven Youth Services provides a safe, supportive and caring place for up to 10 youth between the ages of 12-18 who need emergency shelter and support, or planned respite care.

Our mental health services are expanding with culturally aware staff and we continually educate ourselves on the diverse needs of our community. We invite you to read more about Starling Community Services, our Mission, Vision and Values, and about our commitment to Anti-Racism and Land-Acknowledgement at www.starlingcs.ca

Our tagline is our commitment to you: Caring People. Strengthening Lives.

What to Expect from Safe Haven Youth Services

Safe Haven Youth Services offers a safe alternative to living on the street and planned respite services. Serving the unique needs of vulnerable young persons between the ages of 12 and up to their 18th birthday. The program offers immediate admission and services on a 24-hour a day, 7 day a week basis.

While you are participating in a Safe Haven Youth Services Program, you can expect:

- A safe and caring environment, including shelter, food, clothing, laundry and shower facilities and access to medical care.
- Program opportunities to develop necessary life skills, social skills, self esteem building, emotion management and health and wellness.
- Recreational opportunities.
- The expectation to attend school during the school year.
- Supports to attend school and community activities.
- Facilitation of a Discharge Planning Meeting where staff will work with you and your family to develop strategies, safety plans, and effective coping methods to help you reintegrate into your home more effectively.
- Staff may also recommend further services that may be beneficial to you and your family with links to other youth and family supports and services.

Plan of Action: Upon admittance you will complete an intake form with staff. Through the intake form, a plan of action will be created outlining your needs. Through this plan of action, a discharge plan will be created.

Education: You will be required to attend your community school. Bus tickets will be provided if you do not have a bus pass. Youth that are suspended will require alternative day time arrangements as Safe Haven does not provide a day program.

Programming: We offer programming while you are residing at Safe Haven. Programming topics may include emotion management, life skills; including helping you built the skills to advocate for yourself, especially when dealing with interpersonal conflict or with issues that are emotionally charged. Staff are responsible to ensure that your concerns are clearly and accurately communicated in writing and that you are able to access external support at any time throughout the process.

Individual & Family Counselling: Staff may refer to outside recourses that may provide individual and family therapy.

Community Involvement: Staff often include the use of community resources on a group and individual basis (e.g., outings to recreation centres, movies) as part of our program. You may also remain involved in your current community activities (e.g., sports teams, clubs).

Specialized Accommodations: Staff recognize and will make accommodations for any unique needs (spiritual / religious, ethno-cultural and dietary). In certain cases, we will seek outside resources if we are unable to provide the type of accommodation required internally.

Housing Plans: If you are over the age of 16 and are unable to return home, a housing plan will be developed. This will include the use of assessment tools (SPDAT) and the possible involvement of community resources.

Building Security and Video Surveillance

Video surveillance is in effect. Video feed is recorded and kept for a 7-day period and then erased by “over recording” with surveillance from another day. Cameras placed outside are positioned to monitor the parking lot and access to the building to provide for increased personal safety for clients and staff.

An internal camera is used to monitor the shelter hallway, and is positioned in such a fashion that it is not able to monitor the inside of any bedroom in the shelter. There is no video surveillance in any washroom or change room.

Security and Emergency Systems

To ensure the safety and security of clients, staff and other visitors at the 41 Weber site, an emergency response plan is in place to respond to emergency situations including Evacuation, Severe Weather and Tornados, Bomb Threat, Hostage Situation, Major Disturbance, Utility Outage and Lockdown. These procedures are overseen by Starling Community Services Leadership and the Joint Health and Safety Committee and are in compliance with fire code and licensing requirements. Clients and staff are oriented to these procedures and drills are practiced based on emergency preparedness training.

Lockdown Drills

As is the practice in all Waterloo Region schools, a lockdown is used to secure the 41 Weber site and protect all occupants from life-threatening-violence that requires everyone to find a safe place to hide out-of-sight. Lockdown drills help to keep staff and clients safe, just as drills are done for other emergencies such as fire and tornados. The goal of a lockdown drill is for participants to practice moving rapidly to the closest room where a door can be closed and locked regardless of the circumstances. Lockdown drills will be no longer than five minutes in duration to minimize anxiety for participants. The needs of current children and youth will be identified ahead so that individual preparation and support can be planned for. Staff will be trained on the lockdown procedure during their initial orientation and annually as part of

emergency preparedness training. Lockdown drills will be scheduled twice a year in the early Fall and Spring. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Program Manager.

Orientation to Discipline

At Starling Community Services, we believe that you are able to increase appropriate behaviour and learn from a situation with the support and guidance of staff and with programming opportunities.

Below are the interventions we use at Starling Community Services to support clients who are having difficulty managing their behaviours:

1. Verbal Interventions

- Asking youth to stop what they are doing;
- Inquiring about the situation by setting a time to talk immediately or later;
- Problem solving a plan that will help the next time a similar situation arises;
- Providing cues that the behaviour is not appropriate;
- Providing calming strategies;
- Cueing and coaching to use emotion regulation and other skills;
- Requesting the youth leave the group/activity to do something independently;
- Support in “taking space” and planning how to rejoin the group when the issue is successfully resolved either independently or with staff support;
- Facilitating group discussions related to managing difficult situations.

2. Responsibilities of Youth

- Responsible to know the rules of the program;
- Responsible for choices made regarding following the rules;
- Responsible to respect other people’s rights;
- Accept the consequences of your actions.

Everyone has a responsibility to respect the rights of others—to treat others as they wish to be treated.

As a safe place for all young persons, Safe Haven does not tolerate inappropriate, intimidating, threatening, aggressive, assaultive and/or bullying behaviour that may be physically or verbally displayed.

Service Agreement

In order to participate in Starling Community Services programs, Clients must sign a Service Agreement that confirms:

1. They wish to receive service from Starling Community Services
2. Service is voluntary
3. They understand the agreement clearly.

This agreement clearly outlines Starling Community Services' responsibilities and commitments to our clients, as well as client responsibilities while participating in our programs.

At any time, for any reason, service may be stopped by the client. If we are concerned that the agreement is not being maintained, we will contact you and ask for your continued commitment to the program. Should you not wish to provide it, we can assume that you are withdrawing your voluntary consent to participate in the program.

If there is any confusion or lack of clarity, do not hesitate to ask questions and share your concerns with us.

What We Mean by "Voluntary Service"

If you are under 16 years of age both you and your parent(s)/caregiver(s) will be required to give consent to enter service voluntarily. If consent is not given by both you and your parent, we will try to assist in problem-solving and finding a resolution. In some instances, there are steps that may be taken when parents see a clear need to obtain help for their child and the child is unwilling.

If you are over the age of 16 years and wish individual service without family involvement, this can be provided and your wishes respected.

Privacy Policy

Starling Community Services takes privacy very seriously and is committed to protecting the trust and privacy of its employees, clients, residents, donors, volunteers and other stakeholders. We recognize that maintaining this trust requires that we be transparent and accountable in how we treat the information that you share with us.

Your Personal Health Information

Starling Community Services programs follow the privacy principles as outlined in the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), as well as the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) where they apply. Many safeguards are in place to protect the information you share with us. If you have any questions about our privacy safeguards, please ask your worker or ask to speak with our Privacy Officer.

Purpose of Information Being Collected and Used

When you enter one of our programs, we start a file. We only collect and use information necessary for the purpose of providing the agreed upon service. A more specific purpose statement for collecting and using your information can be found in the program handbook on this website or provided to you at your appointment.

On an ongoing basis, Starling Community Services is required to report to our funders non-identifying aggregate (which means total or overall) data collected about clients using our services for the purpose of demonstrating accountability and measuring the effectiveness of services. Examples of aggregate data reported to funders include number of individuals served and outcomes of service.

Also, Starling Community Services may use non-identifying data externally such as total numbers and/or quotes in proposals, research projects and/or social media for the purpose of seeking funding, promoting and making service improvements within our agency, region and beyond. Internally, Starling Community Services uses non-identifying aggregate data for the purpose of informing risk management, quality improvement and planning.

Direct and Indirect Collection of Information

Information will be collected from you directly as part of your participation in service. There may be circumstances where information is collected indirectly when it reduces risk or when it is not possible to collect it directly from you in an accurate, complete and/or timely manner.

Your Right to Access Your Records

It is your right to have access to your file. You may request to see your file and/or request a copy of information from your file. Certain exceptions apply as outlined in our access to records policy and will be explained to you at the time of request. To access your records as a current

client, a request is made for an appointment with the Program Manager. If you are a past client, an appointment request is made with the Program Director.

Your Right and Responsibility to an Accurate File

You are responsible to provide accurate and up-to-date information and changes and have the right to correct information in your files. You may request that staff make corrections to your records where the record is shown to be incomplete or inaccurate. Staff may require that you put the request in writing to ensure accuracy of changes.

Storage of Records

Your file may be in paper and/or electronic format. Paper files are kept in a locked file cabinet within a locked room. Electronic files are part of a web-based client information system that has many security features in place. Your file cannot be accessed without an assigned and secure password.

Your files are kept for as long as required by standards and legislation. You may ask your worker how long records are kept specific to your program area.

Your Informed Consent

A consent is your verbal or written permission allowing us to ask for and/or share information with specific agencies, organizations or individuals. An "informed" consent for collection use and release of information, means that the purpose has been explained to you in language and format that is understandable to you.

Your Implied or Understood Consent

We would like you to be aware that when participating in a Starling Community Services program or service, your personal health information may be shared with other relevant Starling Community Services staff members and joint service delivery partner staff who are working with you and your care team.

Your Verbal or Written Consent

For staff to either collect information or talk to third party such as a counsellor, family doctor, school, caseworker, landlord etc., we ask for your verbal and/or written permission or 'consent'.

Limits to Confidentiality

We will not disclose your information to any third party without consent except where required by law, where failure to do so might result in serious injury or death of self or others, or where there is knowledge or suspicion of child abuse.

Your Right to Withdraw or Withhold Consent

Consent can be withdrawn at any time by informing us in writing. Once consent is withdrawn, we can no longer seek or share information. Withdrawal of consent cannot reverse any action that was already taken with your previous consent

Electronic Communication Consent (as per Service Agreement)

Starling Community Services recognizes that the use of technology can be a timely and friendly way to communicate however before we agree to communicate via email or text, it is important that everyone understands and accepts the risks and guidelines involved.

1. The privacy and security of electronic communication through email and smart phones cannot be guaranteed. To ensure that all confidential information is secure, you are advised to use password protection on all electronic devices.
2. Electronic communication is not always the best way to communicate. At times a face-to-face meeting with staff may be suggested.
3. You are encouraged to always double check where you have addressed an email or text before sending, as it can be misaddressed and sent to unintended or unknown persons.
4. Staff's email address or contact information is not to be included in any mailing lists. If this occurs, it may result in not being allowed to continue electronic communication with Starling Community Services staff.
5. Deleted emails may not be permanently deleted; back-up copies may exist on a computer or in cyberspace.
6. Emails can introduce viruses into a computer system and potentially damage the files. Emails can be viewed by Starling Community Services IT staff for security purposes.
7. Emails and text messages will be summarized and entered into your file as part of your record. Client records can be used as evidence in court. All copies of emails will be deleted by Starling Community Services.
8. No phone or online video software is entirely secure. Starling Community Services computer systems have strong internal security, which helps protect my privacy and confidentiality. Starling Community Services will not be responsible for breaches of your confidential information if they are not the direct result of intentional misconduct.
9. There is no guarantee that staff will respond to email or text messages immediately. If you need immediate assistance, please do not call your worker, call 911 or seek assistance in other ways appropriate.
10. You are asked to inform your worker of any changes to your email/text address.

Phone & Video Services (as per Service Agreement)

The use of technology can sometimes be a helpful way to provide service to you and your family, when meeting in person is not possible or suitable. However, before we agree to offer services (such as support or therapy) through phone or video options, it is important that you and your family understand and accept the risks and guidelines involved.

1. To ensure your privacy, you should choose a private and quiet place where our conversation cannot be overheard and free from distraction. When meeting by phone or video, there is a risk of others finding out about you working with Starling Community Services if you did not want them to know.
2. You are asked not to record this session without the direct permission of everyone involved.
3. All individuals present for the phone or video session must be within view of the camera or acknowledge their presence so that everyone is fully aware of who is participating.
4. It is necessary to let staff know of your location and provide an emergency contact, and that in the event of an emergency, emergency services may be called to your location.
5. There could be interruptions in meetings due to technology or connection failures, and we will create a plan in advance for what to do if this happens.
6. Everything outlined in the service agreement that applies to in-person meetings also applies to phone and video meetings. Phone and video meetings will be summarized and entered into your file as part of your record, in the same way as in-person meetings.
7. Phone and video meetings are not always the best way to communicate, and staff may decide that they are no longer appropriate. Face-to-face meetings with staff or other alternatives may be suggested if phone or video meetings are no longer suitable.
8. You are requested to use a private internet connection rather than public/free wifi, as this increases confidentiality and security.
9. You are responsible for paying for your own internet costs.
10. You are to use passwords on all your devices as this controls who has access and improves confidentiality and security.
11. No phone or online video software is entirely secure. Starling Community Services computer systems have strong internal security, which helps protect your privacy and confidentiality. Starling Community Services will not be responsible for breaches of your confidential information if they are not the direct result of intentional misconduct of Starling Community Services.

Donor Privacy Policy

The contact information we receive from you as a donor and the amount of your donation is the minimum required by Canada Revenue Agency for the issuance of an official tax receipt. We will not provide or share your personal information with third parties unless:

1. You authorize us to share the information.
2. Sharing the information is necessary to process a donation.
3. We are required to by law.

Who can I contact for more information about this privacy statement?

If you would like to know more about Starling Community Services' privacy policies or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints relating to Starling Community Services' handling of personal health information, we invite you to contact our Privacy Officer, Sherrie Hyde, by email.

You have the right to complain to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario if you think your rights have been violated at <https://www.ipc.on.ca/> or call 1-800-387-0073. For more information about your rights go to <https://www.ipc.on.ca/>

Please note:

- We use standard programs which will count and analyze a range of user activities in order to help us improve the website.
- We reserve the right to modify our Privacy Policy from time to time without notice.

Rights and Responsibilities

Your Rights

While receiving services from Starling Community Services, every family and youth has given rights. Your participation is protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and all these guarantee your:

- Right to legal counsel
- Right to be informed
- Right to be heard
- Right to voice concerns or complaints
- Right to know of the Office of Child & Family Service Advocacy
- Right to know your responsibilities in the program
- Right to know about rules and disciplinary practices
- Right to receive appropriate nutrition
- Right to appropriate clothing
- Right to participate in recreational activities
- Right to receive and participate in an appropriate education, training or work program
- Right to receive medical and dental care
- Right to privacy of mail
- Right to religious practice
- Right to privacy
- Right to personal property
- Right to visits with family
- Rights of communication
- Right to a plan of care/reintegration plan
- Right to be free from corporal punishment

Your rights regarding participation in Starling Community Services' program or service will be reviewed with you, and/or your parent(s)/guardian(s) during the intake process. These rights include:

1. Recognizing that the service is voluntary and giving your consent to the service. Consent means that you clearly understand all aspects of the service.

2. You have the right to participate in designing your Action Plan including setting plans of action, strategies and time limits.
3. You have the right to be informed of any information, decisions and actions that will affect you.
4. You have the right to participate in all decision making relevant to you.
5. You have the right to review and, if necessary, correct Agency information your file/record.

Your Responsibilities

The following is a list of responsibilities that will help you get the most out of your experience while participating in our programs and services:

- Let us know your needs in the most accurate and complete way possible so we can provide the most appropriate service options.
- Be respectful of other clients, volunteers, students, staff and property.
- Contact us when you're unable to keep appointments or to notify us of any change of address or other information relevant to treatment.
- Inform us of health and safety concerns and any accommodation required.
- Provide feedback on services and programs.
- Understand and follow the terms of the Service Agreement.

Risks and Benefits of Participation

As is the case with any service, there are benefits and possible risks that you may experience while participating in one of our programs.

Risks

In the course of making changes, difficult topics may need to be addressed and there may be distressing emotions and reactions that come along with that. You may experience an increase in negative behaviours during this time including resistance, self-harm and uncooperative or disruptive behaviours. Every effort will be made to support you during difficult and challenging periods.

If you or your family refuse supports or withdraw from the program early, the conflicts and concerns that brought you to Starling Community Services are likely to continue.

Benefits

Program interventions and participation in services will offer you a unique opportunity to observe and practice new skills, learn about social norms and improve on relationships at home, in the community and with your peers. While participating in this program or service you may discover new ways of relating to yourself and/or your family that may help resolve the challenges that brought you to Starling Community Services.

Client Complaints Process

At times, you may feel upset or unhappy about what happens while you're involved with Starling Community Services' programs and services. Exploring your thoughts and feelings, even when they are negative is important. If, however, you have major concerns and feel that they are not being addressed, you have access to the Client Complaint Procedures outlined below.

Where there is a concern about the service you are receiving, Starling Community Services needs to know and is committed to resolving all complaints.

There will not be any negative consequences as a result of making a complaint in good faith. Starling Community Services is committed to ensuring that the complaint procedure is carried out in a timely fashion while recognizing some time may be needed to bring the necessary people together.

Starling Community Services will support you to choose a staff member who will assist you with the client complaint process. The staff member is responsible for ensuring your concerns are clearly and accurately communicated in writing, and that you are able to access external support at any time throughout the process.

STEP ONE: The first step to resolve complaints is for you to talk with your designated staff.

STEP TWO: If you are dissatisfied with the response and feel your concerns have not been satisfactorily resolved, we will support you in contacting a Program Supervisor, Manager or Assistant Director or Director in that order. Staff will facilitate contact between you and one of the above individuals in a way that best supports you and the circumstances involved.

STEP THREE: Ongoing unresolved issues may be escalated to the Chief Executive Officer, or his/her designate either by phone or in writing. Staff will assist you in making contact or by providing you with contact information. The CEO will review the issue, seek perspectives from those involved to help resolve the complaint in a timely and equitable manner.

Each step will be acknowledged within 3-5 business days and resolved within 14 business days from point it was acknowledged. If meeting defined timelines is not possible, you will be notified verbally or in writing that it will take longer and the reason for the delay.

If your concerns cannot be addressed at Starling Community Services, you may write to and/or call the Office of the Child and Family Services Advocacy. You can also, at any time, submit your concerns in writing to the Ombudsman, Member of Parliament or the Prime Minister. Starling Community Services staff cannot read this correspondence.

Community Advisory Committee

Starling Community Services' Community Advisory Committee is a small, informal group that offers constructive feedback to Starling Community Services on ways to enhance the quality of its mental health services. We value the unique perspectives of the parents of our youth or adult past participants of one of our programs or services. For more information or to get involved, contact our Director of Mental Health Services at hfedy@lutherwood.ca.