

SAIP CAREGIVER GUIDE

INFORMATION, RESOURCES, AND MORE





Limits to Confidentiality:

Part of the role of a SAIP counsellor is to ensure that children and youth are safe; safe in their body and safe in their home and community. If your child or youth discloses abuse that has not already been reported to MCFD (Ministry of Child and Family Development) and/or the RCMP, the parent or guardian will need to report the abuse. KSACC and the SAIP counsellor will support you and your child in this process. If the parent or caregiver does not report the abuse, the counsellor ethically has to report the abuse to MCFD.



KAMLOOPS SEXUAL ASSAULT
COUNSELLING CENTRE

What is SAIP?

SAIP stands for Sexual Abuse Intervention Program. Our SAIP counsellors provide counselling to children and youth between the ages of 3 and 18 who have experienced sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or for children 12 and under who are showing signs of sexually inappropriate behaviour.

What is Play Therapy?

At KSACC, counsellors use play therapy to help children process through their trauma. Play therapy is recognized as an effective therapeutic approach when working with young clients due to the fact that children express their internal world through play. In our therapeutic playroom, children are free to explore their feelings and emotions in a safe and supportive environment. The toys become their language and it is the role of the counsellor to observe and respond to their play.

In session, the counsellor uses a mix of non-directive and directive approaches. In non-directive play therapy, the child takes the lead while the counsellor looks for patterns in the play. In directive play therapy, the counsellor takes more of an active role by introducing therapeutic activities to create opportunities for education and modeling behaviours. These activities include reading therapeutic books, completing work sheets, role play and grounding exercises designed to alleviate distress, enhance emotion regulation and enforce healthy coping skills.

The goal of play therapy is to support children in healing from their traumatic experiences, foster safety and develop skills that will help them thrive in all areas of life. We believe that parents and caregivers play a key role in ensuring that the work done in therapy is encouraged and reinforced at home.



What to Expect at SAIP Counselling:

Counselling at KSACC is not long term. Your child and their SAIP counsellor will have a counselling relationship only until your child has met their counselling goals, is able to successfully use their coping skills and their trauma symptoms have decreased. It is important children learn that they are strong, brave, resilient and able to manage their stressors on their own with support from their parents/caregivers. Progress in counselling is measured by check-ins between parents/caregivers and the SAIP counsellor.

The goal of your child's treatment at KSACC is to help them understand how their past childhood sexual abuse and trauma is affecting them in the here and now. Goals for your child while in counselling include emotional regulation skills (coping skills), expressing and identifying feelings, redirecting inappropriate sexual behaviours, processing through trauma with natural play, and learning about healthy body boundaries, consent, and sexuality.

Counselling sessions are typically 45 minutes long and are booked every two weeks. If your child "no shows" to their appointment 3 times, they will be moved onto the waitlist. If a child does not attend counselling for 3 months, their file will be closed. If your child needs to resume counselling after 3 "no shows" or 3 months, they will need to go through the Assessment process again and may be put on the waitlist.

Violence:

Children who are violent towards KSACC staff or their SAIP counsellor and/or damage KSACC property or toys will not be permitted to access KSACC services. Children who are violent at KSACC will be referred to Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH).

It is important children learn that they are strong, brave, resilient, and able to manage their stressors on their own with support from their parents/caregivers.



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Symptoms of Trauma in Children:

- Lack of appetite
- Poor sleep (difficulties falling asleep and/or staying asleep)
- Complaints of an upset tummy and/or headaches
- Anxiety and feeling scared
- Irritability and anger
- Aggression
- Problems in school and/or with peers
- Hyperactivity and impulsiveness
- Difficulty putting their trauma or feelings into words
- Daydreaming

Things Your Child Will Learn and Do in SAIP Counselling:

- Coping Skills for Emotional Regulation (belly breathing, grounding and imagery)
- Yoga
- Safety Network
- Body Bubble
- Appropriate and Healthy Sexual Behaviour
- Identifying Feelings
- Decreasing Anxiety
- Resiliency and Hope
- Worksheets
- Therapeutic Books
- Arts and Crafts
- Play!





How Parents and Caregivers Can Support Their Child:

Parental involvement is essential for your child's treatment and healing at KSACC. Parents and caregivers are tasked with the role of helping their child practice their coping skills, such as belly breathing and grounding, and actively implement tools your child has learned from KSACC's therapeutic books on safety, boundaries and appropriate sexual behaviour. Helping your child with these tools needs to be done at home and on a daily basis in order to meet goals and support your child's healing. It is important you and the SAIP counsellor check-in briefly at every session in order to gauge your child's progress.

It is important to develop realistic goals and expectations with your child and your child's SAIP counsellor. Play therapy doesn't magically "fix" children or make problems or behaviours disappear overnight. You, your child, and the SAIP counsellor need work together to explore how to best support your child as they're healing from trauma.

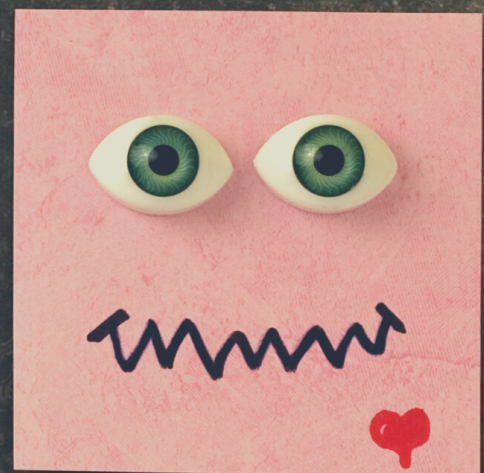
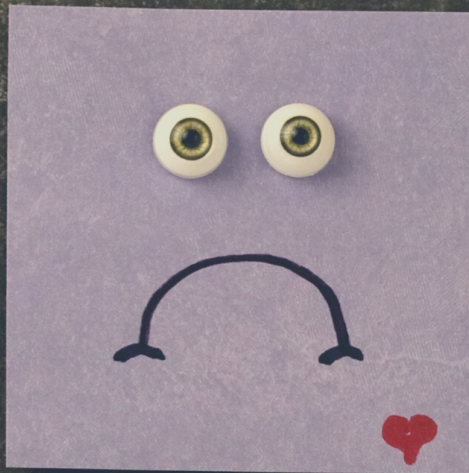
References:

Counseling: How Parents Can Support The Process of Children's Therapy.

<https://www.easternflorida.edu/community-resources/child-development-centers/parent-resource-library/documents/support-childrens-therapy.pdf>



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Tips to Support Your Child:

- Ensure your child attends their counselling sessions regularly. It is important that your child develops a safe and trusting relationship with their counsellor.
- Therapy can be emotionally draining. Keep your child's home and school life as stable as possible and ensure your child is getting adequate sleep, nutrition, and outside play.
- As the parent, it's important that you maintain a positive attitude about therapy and let your child know that you have trust and confidence in their SAIP counsellor.
- Encourage other family members, like siblings, to also have a positive attitude about your child's therapy at KSACC.
- Boost your child's confidence – Tell them you're proud of them for going to counselling and tell them you understand it can be hard to talk about hard things.
- Boost your child's resilience – Don't treat your child like a victim. Tell them you know they're able to handle their strong emotions while supporting them along the way.
- Let your child know they can speak honestly with their counsellor and don't tell them to keep "family secrets" – Buried problems and secrets will undermine the therapeutic process.
- Don't pressure your child to share about what they talked about in therapy. Too much talk of counselling can lead the child to think that their "problem" is more important than other aspects of their life.
- Listen to your child when they want to talk.
- Ensure you check-in with the SAIP counsellor at every session.
- Support and practice skills the SAIP counsellor has taught your child.
- Model healthy behaviour. When you're happy, grounded and calm, your child's nervous system will follow.

