

## What is a Behavioural Health Consultant?

The Behavioural Health Consultant (BHC) works with a patient's health care team. They support patients with a wide variety of mental health, psychosocial, motivational, and medical concerns including management of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, anger, bereavement, smoking cessation, sleep hygiene, chronic pain and diabetes, among others.

BHC's are generalists who have special training in the *behavioural management* of health issues through brief interventions. Together, the BHC and the patient's physician consider the mind-body-behaviour connection and help patients determine a course of action that will work best for them.

## What does the day in the life of a BHC look like?

The BHC may be assigned to work out of either one of the Edmonton North PCN's two centralized locations at Northgate Centre or at Rundle Health Centre, or at one of our member clinics. BHC's meet with patients referred by member physicians to ask specific questions about their physical symptoms, the emotional concerns they may have, their behaviours', and how all of these might be related. Appointments are 20 - 30 minutes in length. The BHC will offer brief treatment after an initial assessment that is focused on finding solutions.

The BHC collaborates with other healthcare professionals including nurses, social workers, dietitians, exercise specialists and pharmacists. They can help the physician and patient navigate PCN services or other community resource options, both formal and informal, when necessary.

The BHC is highly skilled in brief interventions based on CBT, MI, ACT. BHC's do not provide traditional psychotherapy or specialty mental health care but will help to arrange this through PCN Mental Health Therapists or community referrals if requested. They do not prescribe medication but can help with patient adherence.

## Services

The BHC provides a mix of scheduled and in the moment consultation or assessment, behavioural treatment planning, recommendations, and interventions. The BHC will work with the patient from a biopsychosocial perspective at their current stage of change. All strategies will be based on brief interventions to improve self-management and focused on symptom reduction and improved functioning. The BHC may also schedule follow-up appointments focused on improving the patient's level of functioning by teaching of additional skills such as values clarification, problem solving, managing life stresses, mindfulness/relaxation, or help with goal setting. The BHC will see those of all ages, including children, teens, adults, and older adults.

## Goals of Service

To support the primary care physician by assisting patients with the development of practical knowledge and skills to promote and improve physical and emotional health and providing prompt feedback to the physician.