



Ontario Association of  
**CHILD AND YOUTH CARE**  
Association Ontarienne des Techniques  
**D'ÉDUCATION SPÉCIALISÉE**

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## **HEALTH CARE**

### UNDERSTANDING CHILD & YOUTH CARE

Child and Youth Workers/Child and Youth Care Practitioners (CYW/CYCPs) are certified with a 3-year Advanced Diploma in CYC, a Bachelors in CYC and/or Masters in CYC in addition to several specialized post-graduate programs, representing twenty-three post-secondary institutions in the province of Ontario alone. CYCPs are specifically trained in working with

children, youth and families experiencing complex needs of mental health challenges, neurodiverse (ASD, ADHD, LD, Gifted), youth justice, trauma, physical disabilities, and behavioural challenges. They work in diverse settings such as group care and treatment facilities, school boards, hospitals, mental health agencies, community programs, youth justice programs, shelters, child protection, employment services, academia, government and privately with individuals and families.

#### Specific Health Care Supports Provided by CYCPs:

CYCPs offer direct tier 1 and tier 2 in-patient and community support in order to proactively prevent crisis and support those who have transitioned out of crisis and back into the community. The nature of life-space intervention work is direct, trauma informed, evidenced-based, and in collaboration with the clinical nature of the specific setting.

In crisis or acute mental health units, CYCPs are responsible for:

1. Developing and implementing evidence-based individualized treatment plans
2. Translating clinical tasks into easy, achievable and soothing activities and goals
3. Facilitating therapeutic activities based on clinical recommendations

4. De-escalating patients in crisis who are displaying severe behavioural challenges
5. Building therapeutic relationships
6. Teaching strategies related to coping
7. Advocating for patients and their family

#### CYCP Role(s) in the Health Care Sector:

CYCPs working in health care settings are often the professionals employed to facilitate mental health care and support for children and youth, They are commonly referred to as Child and Youth Workers (CYW), Child and Youth Counsellors (CYC) and Child and Youth Care Practitioners (CYCP). They provide direct support for patients in crisis and impacted by serious mental health concerns or illness.

#### Who CYCPs Work Alongside:

CYCPs work alongside Doctors, Social Workers, Nurses, Psychiatrists, etc., working all shift rotations (8-12 hours per day, providing direct face to face care), much like Nurses and Doctors.

Doctors and Nurses rely heavily on the work of CYCPs in the following settings:

1. Child and Adolescent Mental Health In-Patient Units including Mental Health Organizations
2. Child and Adolescent Community Outpatient Support (Drop In Programs, Day Treatment, Family Support - in and out of home, etc.)
3. Emergency Room Mental Health Support - supporting children, youth and families while awaiting and completing mental health assessments that determine imminent risk to self or others
4. Education and Treatment-based Programs - supporting needs of children, youth and transitional aged youth (both in-patient and community based)
5. Specialized Behavioural Support - supporting patients with complex behavioural needs to receive medical care

#### CYCPs are Integral to Health Care - Especially During COVID-19:

During COVID-19, CYCPs have continued to work providing critical support and direct care in hospital settings. They have actively responded to the mental health needs of children and youth, especially during the pandemic in the following ways:

1. Support children, youth and families separated during isolation/quarantine protocols

2. De-escalate and support families during mental health crisis including the added distress related to COVID-19
3. As a safety precaution, some CYCPs were required to reside in hotels and other accommodations away from their family to quarantine during the initial outbreak
4. Support family reintegration and unification as well as maintain virtual support post-discharge (increased with the temporary closure of community based organizations)

The OACYC advocates that all CYCPs working frontline in health care settings receive pandemic pay.