



Robson Valley Community Services

# Client Handbook



**Proudly Serving the Robson Valley since 1980**

## ABOUT THE AGENCY

The Mission: Robson Valley Community Services (RVCS) is a charitable, non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening all individuals, families, and communities by providing *programs and services*, and by collaborating within a rural environment.

The Vision: Robson Valley Community Services aims to continually adapt and respond to the ever-changing needs of the Robson Valley, from a community social-service perspective.

### Our Values:

Values	Definition
<b>Accountability &amp; Transparency</b>	We are aware of who we are accountable to, and commit to maintaining records and communicating effectively with all stakeholders in order to provide information, that is easily understood, on how we deliver services.
<b>Client-Centered Services</b>	We serve the community as a whole and not the interests of any specific or special interest group(s).
<b>Confidentiality</b>	We will not reveal information about our clients or contracts to anyone, under any circumstances, without their written consent or as required to do so by a court of law.
<b>Dignity &amp; Respect</b>	Regardless of who the client is, and regardless of their behaviour or background, the client deserves to be treated as a person of worth and value.
<b>Professionalism</b>	All community members are entitled to professional competence, commitment to and observance of professional ethics. RVCS will never, under any circumstances, impose the personal or agency beliefs and values upon clients.
<b>Timely Response</b>	We will respond appropriately and promptly to all community member ideas and concerns, while encouraging positivity through respect and commitment to our work.

## OUR PROGRAMS

RVCS offers a wide variety of free client, family-centered and client-directed services to children, youth, families and individuals. Residents of the Robson Valley may access support around the following programs and services (Please click the program links below to access additional information):

- [Literacy Programs](#)
- [Seniors Programs](#)
- [Infant Development Program](#)
- [Supported Child Development](#)
- [Child & Youth Mental Health](#)
- [Police-Based Victim Services](#)
- [PEACE Program](#)
- [Safe Home, Information & Support](#)
- [Sexual Assault Response Program](#)
- [Stopping the Violence Outreach](#)
- [Stopping the Violence Counselling](#)
- [Second Stage Housing Program](#)
- [Family Support Program](#)
- [Family Court Support Program](#)
- [Family Place Drop-In](#)
- [Roots of Life Childcare Centre](#)
- [WorkBC](#)

### RVCS PROGRAM HOURS\*

<b>Monday</b>	8:30am – 4:00pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	8:30am – 4:00pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	8:30am – 4:00pm
<b>Thursday</b>	8:30am – 4:00pm
<b>Friday</b>	8:30am – 4:00pm

\* This schedule applies to all RVCS locations and programs except for WorkBC.

### WORKBC HOURS\*\*

10:00am – 6:00pm
8:00am – 4:00pm
8:00am – 4:00pm
8:00am – 4:00pm
8:00am – 4:00pm

\*\* This schedule applies to our Valemount location at 99 Gorse Street

## CLIENT ORIENTATION

All clients admitted to a Robson Valley Community Services (RVCS) program will receive an orientation to services that is thorough, appropriate to your needs, understandable, and inclusive of family members where appropriate. Providing a thorough orientation helps to ensure that you understand what services you will receive, how you can have input, what your rights and expectations are and what end results are possible. This understanding supports your acceptance of the service and allows you to make informed decisions.

Additionally, program supervisors or managers may check in with clients to ensure quality of care. Clients are encouraged to utilize the process for providing feedback at any time during service. Please see page 9 of this Handbook for details.

## SERVICE DURATION

Some of our one-on-one mental health programs follow a service duration guideline. You can expect the delivery of the services provided to you to follow the timeline information in the table below:

<b>Request for Service/Referral</b>	First Contact with Agency (Day 1)
<b>If a Waitlist Exists</b>	Waitlisted clients are contacted every 30 days to inform them of placement & expected wait times, provide resources or emergency lines.
<b>Program Worker contacts the Client</b>	Within 5 business days from request for service/referral
<b>Program Intake/Consent forms (1-1.5 hours)</b>	Within 2 weeks from First Contact
<b>First Session (up to 50 minutes weekly)</b>	Within 3 weeks of First Contact
<b>Comprehensive Assessment (CYMH only)</b>	Within 4 weeks of First Contact
<b>Service Plan (Goals)</b>	Within 6 weeks of First Contact
<b>Service Plan Review</b>	Within 3 months of service plan
<b>Total Sessions Offered</b>	10-20 Sessions
<b>Continuation or Completion of Service</b>	After 20 sessions

## WAITLISTS

Where a program is full and a waitlist exists, you will be notified of your placement on the waitlist and be given the agency Client Handbook and Program Information Sheet along with any relevant information for crisis lines, 1-800 numbers, self-help resources, group programs, and other community resources that are available to you while you are waiting for program availability. During this time waitlisted clients are contacted every 30 days by a program worker who will let you know of availability changes or if you are to continue on the waitlist.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All client information is privileged and confidential. Employees shall not transmit any information to another person without prior authorization from the client receiving the direct service (or legal guardian) unless permitted by law. Release of confidential information, when authorized through a "Consent to Release Information," shall be in the best interest of service delivery to the client and adhere to the agency's release of information policy.

## WHAT IF I AM NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THIS SERVICE?

If you are not eligible for this service, you will be provided with information about the reasons why you are not eligible and with information about other services you may be able to access. This could include both the services we offer and other services available in the community. We will support you in accessing these services and help with the referral process if you need it. If you believe that you are eligible for this service and would like us to reconsider our decision, we encourage you to do so. Please follow the Client Complaints Policy provided in this booklet. If you need help with a complaint, please ask and we will assist with the process.

## **PROGRAM & SERVICE COST**

RVCS is pleased to offer our programs and services to our clients free of charge. The exception to this includes childcare, preschool, housing services, some services within our Better at Home program, and pertaining to supervised visits. Should you wish for financial assistance support in these areas such as a subsidy for childcare services or income assistance, please let your program worker know.

## **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

All program staff employed at the Society have specialized training in their respective disciplines related to the services they deliver. If you would like information about the qualifications of a staff person you are working with, please ask and the information will be provided to you. Please note that RVCS employs some staff who are paraprofessionals, whose focus may be delivering psycho-educational programs, working within our scope of practice and refer out when required and as appropriate.

## **PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING & SERVICE DELIVERY**

We encourage active participation in self-identified goals through the services you receive. Making decisions in your own care invaluable shapes and influences the service experience. We also encourage family participation in all our services to the greatest extent possible. You have the right to have family members, or your guardian(s) participate in the services you receive. Many services can be offered to clients virtually. Staff can assist clients in effectively accessing and using video conferencing software ([Zoom](#) or [Microsoft Teams](#)) should the need arise. Should virtual services increase your access to services, please discuss this option with your program worker and read our [Client Privacy Policy](#).

## **ACCOMODATING SPECIAL NEEDS OR REQUESTS**

As part of our commitment to providing accessible services to all clients, we make efforts to minimize the impact of potential barriers to participating in services. We do our best to accommodate needs related to disabilities or special requests related to how we deliver our services, such as a request for a staff person with specific characteristics if and where possible. If you have a disability that requires some accommodation or a request you would like to make, please speak to our staff.

## **FOOD SECURITY**

Our team believes that all people deserve access to healthy, culturally appropriate food, and we encourage our clients, or anyone who walks through the door and is in need, to request access to our food security offerings across the Valley. Currently our organization also manages the Valemount Community Garden, which supports community members to grow food, share knowledge and participate in social events. We also offer [Food Literacy Programs](#) like Food Skills for Families that teach basic nutrition and cooking skills to allow everyone the confidence to cook meals that make them feel healthy. If you'd like support from any of these resources, please reach out to [foodsecurity@rvcsbc.org](mailto:foodsecurity@rvcsbc.org).

## **HEALTH & SAFETY OF CLIENTS**

We take the safety and security of both our clients and our staff very seriously. We have health and safety policies and procedures that our staff are familiar with and are required to follow. We maintain our equipment and facilities consistent with all applicable laws and regulations. We regularly assess the health and safety standards within the agency through committee meetings to address safety concerns. If you have any questions about safety or have any safety concerns, please feel free to ask or bring items to our attention.

Please note that the use or possession of alcohol, unauthorized legal and illegal substances, drugs and weapons are strictly prohibited in all RVCS facilities and off-site activities.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Our organization has a series of policies and procedures in place designed to ensure safety in the event of an accident or other kind of emergency. Staff are familiar with these procedures, and many have specific training, such as First Aid, to deal with these situations. If you have any questions about emergency preparedness or about the training that our staff receives, please feel free to ask.

## CLIENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

RVCS will inform you of your rights and responsibilities relative to the services delivered and provide sufficient information to assist you in making informed choices about program acceptance and continuation of services.

1. While participating in our services, you have the right to:
  - a. Give informed consent for service and express choice regarding service delivery, release of information, and who will be involved in providing service.
  - b. Services that are timely, caring, professional, and ethical.
  - c. Express your opinions, values, and beliefs, and have them included or considered in anything that affects you. This includes the right to express and practice your religious and spiritual beliefs while receiving services.
  - d. A copy of the agency's complaint procedure, have the procedure explained to you, and to file a complaint if you feel that your rights have not been respected or your concerns regarding the services you are receiving are not being addressed.
  - e. Involve your family or legal guardian in the services you receive, including making decisions with you or on your behalf where appropriate.
  - f. Assistance in accessing special care in order to meet your needs while participating in our services should you require it.
  - g. Have the information we collect as part of the services you receive kept in a secure, private and confidential manner. This includes the right to access information from the record of services you have received in a timely manner.
  - h. Receive services that are non-coercive and that protect your right to self-determination. This includes freedom from any form of abuse, exploitation, retaliation, humiliation or neglect.
  - i. Have the rules, behavioral expectations, and other factors that might result in discharge or termination explained to you.
  - j. Have your cultural heritage recognized, respected, and responded to as appropriate to the services you are receiving.
  - k. Receive services in a healthy and safe environment.
  
2. While participating in our services, you have the responsibility to:
  - a. Act in ways that bring respect to me, my family and friends and other participants within the program.
  - b. Not use bad language, swear, insult or fight with other people.
  - c. Refrain from any form of personal abuse towards others, including verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
  - d. Not engage in any inappropriate contact or relationship with any other participant in the organization's program.
  - e. Participate actively in the program.
  - f. Try new activities and learn new skills to the best of my ability.
  - g. Not ask to include my friends, brothers, sisters, or other family members in program activities unless they are so invited.
  - h. Inform my family or caregivers of my program activities.
  - i. Not keep secrets about my relationship or activities within the program.
  - j. Be on time and dressed appropriately for all program activities.
  - k. Let the organization know if my plans change and I am unable to keep an appointment or participate in an activity.

- l. Not expect the staff to buy me gifts, give me money or take me on expensive outings.
- m. Keep contact with the organization's staff by responding to phone calls, letters and other means of communicating promptly.
- n. Immediately talk to a representative from the organization if a problem develops.
- o. Contact the organization if a problem develops within my family or other circumstances occur that affect my participation in the program.
- p. Follow the formal complaint process if I have a complaint about the services received.
- q. Agree to follow all established rules and guidelines of the organization.

**At any point should you feel your rights have been infringed on, please report it. See the Formal Complaint Process section on page 9 of this handbook for details.**

## SMOKING & VAPING USE

RVCS endeavors to provide a safe and healthy work environment for staff and service recipients. The following requirements have been established to maintain a safe working environment in relation to smoking and vaping products:

- The use of all smoking and vaping products is prohibited in all RVCS buildings, entryways to facilities, grounds and vehicles. Smoking is prohibited within 6 meters of entrance doors. An exception may be made for the ceremonial use of smoking and vaping products in the context of RVCS programming with the explicit written permission of the Co-Executive Director(s).
- RVCS does not provide designated smoking/vaping areas. Smoking on RVCS sites is strictly prohibited.
- Employees are expected to enforce the smoking/vaping restrictions with clients and visitors.
- Employees and service recipients are not permitted to smoke/vape when using RVCS vehicles or when participating in sanctioned RVCS activities.

## SERVING MATURE MINORS

RVCS considers the rights of persons served, families and/or legal guardians to participate in decisions regarding the services provided. When serving minors without guardian consent, RVCS will provide service to minors when the child has the capacity and is legally able to consent to their own services, as defined in the Infants Act. A minor is defined as a child or youth under the age of 19.

If the child is a mature minor and has primary responsibility for decisions related to services received, RVCS staff must seek the informed consent of the child prior to the release of personal or confidential information to the guardians.

## ACCESS TO MY FILE

We believe in open and accountable service. You have the right to see your personal information that is contained in your confidential file. A client, or a guardian of a minor client, must **submit this completed [form](#)** to their program worker, who will then forward the request onto management. You will receive a response within 30 days. Please review more [information here](#) on your rights to information as a client. Clients may request to view the file or receive a copy.

**All agency services are voluntary.  
You may refuse any service at any time\*.**

*\* If a client is mandated to receive services by an authority such as the Ministry of Children & Families Development and they choose to refuse services, RVCS is required to notify the referring authority.*

# EMPLOYEE CODE OF ETHICS

All Employees and Volunteers of the Society will conduct themselves consistent with the following ethical principles:

- a) Respect for the uniqueness of the clients we serve, including their values and beliefs as well as their potential for growth and development.**

Practice Requirements:

- Ensure that client differences including values and beliefs are respected.
- Maintain a strength and solution-oriented perspective in our approach to service delivery consistent with our service delivery philosophy.
- Assist client to develop to their full potential.

- b) Respect for, honouring of, and upholding the rights of clients.**

Practice Requirements:

- Recognize and respect client confidentiality.
- Protect and promote legal and human rights of client.
- Ensure that client self-determination is respected to the greatest extent possible.
- Engage in actions that prevent the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of clients.
- Ensure that all clients have the opportunity to provide informed consent to services to the greatest extent possible.

- c) Promoting the health, safety and well-being of the clients we serve, their families and support networks, and the communities they live in.**

Practice Requirements:

- Promote the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual health of the clients and families we serve.
- Ensure that safety is a priority in the delivery of all Agency programs consistent with Health and Safety policy.
- Where possible and appropriate, to participate in activities that promote the health and safety of the community consistent with our mission and values.

- d) Caring, support, and striving to enhance the dignity of the clients and families we serve.**

Practice Requirements:

- Respect the privacy, dignity, and worth of clients and their property.
- Show compassion and empathy in the services we provide.
- Refrain from any activity that might embarrass, belittle or demoralize clients or their family members.

- e) Practice that emphasizes partnerships with the clients we serve, their families and support networks, and the community including other community service providers.**

Practice Requirements:

- Where possible, to take a collaborative approach to service delivery that emphasizes shared responsibility.
- Endeavour to include and consult families and support networks of the clients we serve while respecting their wishes and confidentiality
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with community partners and referring sources.
- Develop and promote the expectations and choices of clients.

- f) Respect for diversity, cultural heritage, and spiritual beliefs.**

Practice Requirements:

- Showing sensitivity to the impact of cultural heritage and spiritual belief in the delivery of services.
- Accommodating cultural and spiritual practices and beliefs where possible and reasonable within the context of the service we provide.
- Take reasonable action to prevent and eliminate discrimination in all forms including, but not limited to, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, and race.

**g) Commitment to competent and accountable practice that is both ethical and responsible.**

Practice Requirements:

- Practice our professions to the best of our ability.
- Practice within the policies and procedures of the agency.
- Identify and avoid all conflicts of interest.
- Promote ethical conduct within the agency and in the community.
- Recognize when personal problems or needs can interfere with professional effectiveness and act to eliminate or minimize the impact through setting firm professional boundaries.
- Demonstrate integrity in all professional relationships.
- Act with diligence, efficiency, and conscientiousness.
- Abstain from activities that might result in the actual or perceived exploitation of clients for advantage or personal gain, including accepting or exchanging gifts, money, and gratuities or engaging in fund raising not related to agency initiatives. Staff may exchange token gifts with clients but must report all such instances to their immediate Program Manager.
- Maintain accountable reporting practices including reporting all incidents of abuse or neglect and all instances where harm or the potential for harm to children, families, employees or members of the community at large occurs or is present.
- Ensure that any situations involving the witnessing of documents, and legal documents, is consistent with agency policy (including Informed Consent) and in the best interest of clients served.

**h) Commitment to professional and organizational excellence through an accountable, transparent and results oriented approach to delivering services.**

Practice Requirements:

- Strive to provide the most effective service possible by participating in activities designed to improve the services we deliver.
- Continuously pursue improvement in our ability to provide services through seeking out and implementing best practices, taking actions to enhance the knowledge, skills, and self-awareness necessary to be competent, and evaluating our efforts.
- Value client input to the greatest extent possible.
- Ensure that human resource practices are fair, transparent, respect equality and are conducted in the best interests of the clients served.
- Ensuring the honest representation of the organization in any business, marketing or, promotional efforts.
- Ensuring that all contracts entered into by the agency are consistent with the best interests of the clients served, adhere to agency policy regarding contracting, and that contractual relationships avoid conflicts of interest.
- Abstain from any act of professional misconduct, including activity or practices that involve intentionally wasting or misusing our resources, committing fraud or engaging in intimidating or abusive behaviour.

**Any instances of suspected violations of the Code of Conduct should be reported immediately.**

**Please express your concerns to your program worker or a manager,  
or make a formal complaint by submitting [this form](#) to [feedback@rvcsbc.org](mailto:feedback@rvcsbc.org).**

**Any such instances will be investigated and acted upon consistent with the "B18 RVCS Discipline" policy.**

## **CLIENT EXPERIENCE SURVEYS**

To improve client satisfaction, clients of RVCS are sent a survey at the end of service and again annually via email. As a client of RVCS you are consenting to receive this survey via email but are under no obligation to complete it. Client responses are anonymous, and are used to help improve RVCS programming and services.

# CLIENT COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

## *Giving a Compliment*

We appreciate all feedback that our clients and their families may wish to share with us. If you have something you'd like to express, please reach out to [feedback@rvcsbc.org](mailto:feedback@rvcsbc.org) and let us know what went well.

## *Expressing a Concern or Complaint*

Clients and/or their families are encouraged to bring any concern they have with the services they have received directly to the attention of program staff and to attempt to resolve issues informally through open and respectful dialogue. Any concerns brought to the attention of staff must be documented in daily notes or sessional recordings along with the staff response to the concern. In the event that an individual or family member has not had their concern addressed to their satisfaction through an informal process, the concern will be considered a formal complaint by the agency and the formal complaint process will be followed.

## *Formal Complaint Process*

1. In the event that a client, family member/guardian or community member has not had their complaint or concern addressed to their satisfaction and/or wishes to submit a formal complaint rather than address the concern informally, a formal complaint process will be made available to them. The complaint process is as follows:
  - a. The individual will be provided with the [formal complaint form](#) and will be provided with assistance in filling out the form should they require it. The staff member who becomes aware of the complaint will assist them in completing the form as needed or requested, date it and sign it received, and forward it to their program manager or by emailing [feedback@rvcsbc.org](mailto:feedback@rvcsbc.org).
  - b. The manager will investigate the matter and will respond to the complainant within 10 working days. The response to the complaint and explanation of any decisions regarding the complaint will be provided in writing and will be sent by registered mail or provided to the individual directly. A copy of the complaint and response will be provided to the agency's Co-Executive Director(s) and any other concerned party at the Director's discretion and consistent with RVCS's confidentiality policy. All letters of response to a complaint from a manager will include instructions indicating that if the individual is not satisfied with the response, they can appeal the matter to the Co-Executive Director(s).
  - c. In the event that an individual chooses to appeal a manager's decision, the request should be made in writing and program staff or the manager will assist in completing another complaint from as required. Individuals are asked to make such requests within 30 days of receiving the response from the manager.
  - d. Upon receipt of a request to review the complaint, the Co-Executive Director(s) will investigate the matter and will respond to the individual within 15 working days. The process for reviewing the complaint may include consultations with the individual making the complaint, the manager, a review of file information, and gathering information from the individuals involved. The response to the complaint and explanation of any decisions regarding the complaint will be provided in writing and will be sent by registered mail or provided to the complainant directly.
  - e. All letters of response from the Co-Executive Director(s) to a complaint will include instructions indicating that if the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they will be encouraged to take the matter to the RVCS Board of Directors. They will be provided with instructions on how to appeal to the Board.
  - f. Upon receipt of a request to review the complaint, the Board Chair will lead the process of the Board investigating the matter and the Board will respond to the individual within 15 working days. The process for reviewing the complaint may include further consultations with the individual making the complaint, the Co-Executive Director(s), a review of file information, and gathering information from the individuals involved. The response to the complaint by the Board Chair on behalf of the Board and an explanation of any decisions regarding the complaint will be provided in writing and will be sent by registered mail or provided to the complainant directly.
  - g. All letters of response from the Board of Directors to a complaint will include instructions indicating that if the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they will be encouraged to take the matter to an appropriate external authority, such as the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC, a duly appointed children's advocate or representative where such individuals have authority to act on behalf of the individual, or to the Provincial Ombudsman.

2. Information about the complaint process will be made available to all clients and their family members/guardians at the time of intake to service and upon request. Complaint forms will be made publicly available at all service delivery locations.
3. All complaints are treated as confidentially, except where disclosure is necessary to complete an investigation. Where disclosure is necessary, consent will be obtained from the complainant.
4. RVCS expressly forbids any form of retaliation or action that could result in a barrier to service to be taken against a client, family member/guardian or community member making a complaint.
5. If the complaint is directed at the supervisor or for another valid reason should not be investigated the supervisor, the matter will be referred directly to the Co-Executive Director(s) or Board of Directors for review as appropriate. In all cases, a person bringing forward a concern or making a formal complaint will be supported through the process. The individual can request a staff person, another professional or a community member act as an advocate for them in this process. RVCS will make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests.

## AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Our program generally provides services during regular business hours. Should you need support or have an emergency outside of those hours, we encourage you to access other services outside of our agency appropriate to the type of need or emergency you are experiencing. This includes:

### Medical Needs or Emergencies:

- 1) Call **911** in the event of a medical emergency
- 2) Contact HealthLink BC for medical information and advice: **811**
- 3) Contact Canadian Mental Health Crisis Line: **988**

### Emergency Need for Respite Care

- 1) Contact the Ministry of Children and Family Development after hours: **1-800-663-9122**

### Child Welfare or Mental Health Emergency

- 1) Northern Health Crisis Line **1-888-562-1214**
- 2) Ministry of Children and Family Development After Hours: **1-800-663-9122**

### Emergency Shelter & Information for Self Identifying Women at Risk of, or Fleeing Violence

- 1) Call **911** in case of emergency
- 2) Contact RVCS Safe Home Program **1-844-324-2004** and choose applicable option

### Sexual Assault Responses for All Genders

- 1) Call **911** in case of emergency
- 2) Contact RVCS Sexual Assault Response Program **1-844-324-2004** and choose applicable option

### Suicidality & Crisis Prevention:

- 1) Call **911** in case of emergency
- 2) Contact Northern BC Crisis Line **1-888-562-1214**
- 3) Contact Suicide Canada **1-833-456-4566**

## RVCS CONTACT INFORMATION

McBride	Valemount #1	Valemount #2
PO Box 430	PO Box 1171	PO Box 1171
942 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave	99 Gorse Street	1451 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
McBride, BC, V0J 2E0, Canada	Valemount, BC, V0E 2Z0, Canada	Valemount, BC, V0E 2Z0, Canada
<b>250-569-2266</b>	<b>250-566-9107</b>	<b>250-566-9107</b>
250-569-2200 (fax)	250-566-0011 (fax)	250-566-0011 (fax)
Toll-free: 1-844-324-2004		
General inquiries: <a href="mailto:info@rvcsbc.org">info@rvcsbc.org</a>		
<a href="http://www.robsonvalleycommunityservices.org">www.robsonvalleycommunityservices.org</a>		