Mental Health Services

Program Overview

PBCFS Mental Health Services provides culturally grounded therapeutic support to children and youth in care and, where identified, to their families. Services are delivered by in-house clinicians who understand the context in which PBCN families live — including the intergenerational impacts of residential schools, colonization, systemic poverty, and community loss — and who integrate Cree cultural approaches with evidence-informed clinical practice. Mental Health Services is not a stand-alone clinic; it works in close partnership with the rest of the PBCFS system of care.

Program Philosophy

Mental health and cultural health are inseparable. For children and families served by PBCFS, emotional and psychological wellbeing cannot be understood apart from history, community, culture, and identity. PBCFS Mental Health Services embraces a broad understanding of healing that includes both clinical approaches and Cree ways of knowing. The program does not pathologize children and families — it recognizes that what look like symptoms are often normal responses to abnormal circumstances. Healing happens in relationship, in culture, and in community.

Program Goals

- Improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and youth in care and their families.
- Provide culturally safe, trauma-informed clinical support that respects the whole person.
- Reduce the impact of trauma, grief, and intergenerational harm on the children and families served by PBCFS.
- Support children's healthy development, attachment, and capacity for positive relationships.
- Integrate Cree cultural healing approaches with clinical practice to provide holistic, meaningful support.
- Build the capacity of foster parents, group home staff, and family members to support children's mental wellness.

Operational Information

Population Served	Children and youth in the care of PBCFS, with services extending to birth families and foster/resource families where clinically indicated and appropriate.
Settings	PBCFS offices, group homes, foster homes, schools, community settings, and wherever is most appropriate and accessible for the client. Services are delivered in Prince Albert and across PBCN communities.
Hours of Service	Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for crisis response. Scheduled clinical services are provided during planned hours, with after-hours support accessible through on-call arrangements.
Days of Service	Every day of the year.
Frequency of Service	Frequency of clinical sessions is determined by the needs of the child or family and the treatment plan. Crisis response is available on demand.
Payers / Funding	Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).
Fees	No fees.
Referral Sources	Internally from PBCFS Child and Family Services, Prevention Services, and Resources programs. External referrals from community partners may also be accepted.

Services Offered

Individual Counselling and Therapy

Clinicians provide individual counselling and therapeutic support for children and youth experiencing trauma, grief, anxiety, depression, behavioural challenges, or other mental health concerns. Treatment is tailored to the individual and draws on evidence-informed approaches including trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy, attachment-based interventions, narrative therapy, and other modalities suited to the client.

Provided directly by PBCFS Mental Health clinicians.

Family Counselling and Support

Mental Health Services extends support to families — including birth families, foster families, and other caregivers — where family dynamics, communication, or relationship repair are identified as needs. Family sessions support reconnection, conflict resolution, and the development of healthy relationships.

Provided directly by PBCFS Mental Health clinicians.

Crisis Support

Clinicians are accessible for mental health crisis response in coordination with CFS and Resources staff. This includes immediate support for children and youth experiencing acute distress, self-harm risk, or psychiatric crises, and coordination with community health and emergency services where needed.

Provided directly by PBCFS Mental Health clinicians; referral to community health and emergency services as required.

Consultation and Capacity Building

Mental Health clinicians provide consultation to CFS workers, group home staff, and foster parents to help them understand and respond to the mental health needs of the children in their care. This includes training, case consultation, and advice on trauma-informed practices.

Provided directly.

Cultural and Holistic Healing Integration

Mental Health Services actively incorporates Cree cultural healing approaches into therapeutic work, including Elder involvement, ceremony, and land-based healing activities as clinically appropriate and with the client's engagement. The program recognizes that for many clients, cultural healing is both preferred and clinically effective.

Provided directly and in collaboration with Elders and cultural practitioners.

Service Modalities and Personnel

Primary Modality	Trauma-informed, culturally integrated individual and family counselling and therapy.
Additional Modalities	Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT); attachment-based therapy; narrative therapy; grief counselling; play therapy (for younger children); psychoeducation; Elder-supported healing; land-based therapeutic activities.
Personnel	Mental Health Clinicians — typically at the bachelor's level (BSW, BSc Psychology, or related field); all clinical practice is supervised by a qualified clinical supervisor holding a master's degree (MSW, MA, or equivalent). Cultural knowledge, lived experience, and community connection are valued competencies. All clinicians receive training in trauma-informed practice.