

THE VANCOUVER EMOTIONAL EMERGENCY CENTRE

220 West 6th Ave.
872-7914

The Vancouver Emotional Emergency Centre is funded under a Local Initiatives Project Grant, and has been in operation since early January, 1974. We operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with a capacity of five beds.

It has been set up as a refuge and resource where people undergoing an acute life-crisis may come and receive the support they need. We see ourselves as a type of emotional first-aid station providing nurturance, support and counselling, as well as a home-like setting. Activities vary from resident to resident, and are always tailored to individual needs. Some people require verbal counselling, others just want someone to listen to their problems, there are some who request to be held for awhile, while others need an impartial umpire in interpersonal problems. There are some residents who are temporarily unable to cope with day-to-day personal maintenance such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. and we assist them in this area. Our work includes getting to know the person and establishing a sense of trust; determining the source of the person's pain and encouraging him/her to express feelings in an acceptable way and to deal openly and realistically with the problems; attempting to help establish an honest, co-operative relationship among the residents; and assisting the person in the discovery of alternate ways of living which will help avoid future life crises.

We recognize that people in life crises often make exhaustive demands. No one individual can satisfy them. For this reason, we have created supportive teams which work with each resident of the Centre. Teams consist of staff members, volunteers, welfare recipients registered with the Vancouver Opportunities Program, and fellow residents and ex-residents of the Centre. The team attempts to involve the resident, no matter how distressed, in all the decisions pertaining to his/her life. An attempt is made to develop a contract with the resident that he/she chooses to be at the Centre. Involuntary commitment is outside our scope.

Due to our limited budget as well as the demanding nature of the work, we are only set up to provide care for five people at any given time. For this reason, we are emphasizing short term care only. We will attempt to provide the supportive care a person needs during the peak of his or her crises, and gently encourage the person toward increased self-support. Once a resident is ready to leave, team members will assist personally with his/her re-entry into the community, or will refer the person to other agencies. Several trained staff members are available for follow-up counselling for those ex-residents who desire it. We are always trying to encourage the ex-residents to give each other the support they need rather than build up an unhealthy dependence upon us.

We want to encourage contact between the Emotional Emergency Centre and other social service agencies within the Greater Vancouver Area. We welcome calls from anyone. As we are open 24 hours a day, we can be reached at the above number anytime.