**The Salvation Army**

**Women’s Counselling Centre**

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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| Section: | Program |
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| Date Created: | May 2015 |
| Date Reviewed: | July 2017 |
| Authority: | Director |

# Discharge Criteria and Process

**Policy:**

It is the policy of the Women’s Counselling Centre to ensure that we are serving our client’s best interests in our programs.

**Procedure:**

It is unhelpful to keep a client coming for service when she no longer needs it. This can result in fostering dependency and may be disempowering to the client. In service planning, staff members should be mindful of the need to terminate when the client no longer requires our services.

There are several reasons why a client may be discharged from our program:

* Client goals are met
* Client needs a break from counselling / transition support
* Client drops out
* Client regularly misses appointments
* Client is participating in a workshop which has concluded
* Client moves out of Peel Region
* Client requires specialized help from a different kind of program
* Client is unwilling to behave within the established guidelines of the Centre

It is inappropriate to discuss discharge with a client who is in crisis. Discharge discussion should be brought up by the staff member when the client is no longer in crisis and has shown progress in meeting the goals that she has set for herself.

For counselling clients who are receiving the full 25 sessions, the discharge process and form should begin to be used at approximately the 20th session, or earlier if appropriate, and completed by the end of the 25th session. For clients who do not require the full 25 sessions, the discharge process and form should be used approximately 3-5 sessions,

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or earlier if appropriate, before the end of the counselling relationship and completed by the final session.

As much as possible, staff members are to prepare their clients for discharge and termination of counselling. The topic of termination should not be a surprise to a client and should be discussed with them. It is ideal if the termination is by mutual agreement of the client and counsellor and is planned for.

It is understood that clients sometimes choose to terminate their relationship with us by simply not returning for appointments and not returning phone calls. In this case, it may not be possible to complete the entire discharge process and staff members should complete as much of the form as possible noting that the client has dropped out.

Counsellors may choose to taper sessions with clients seeing them less frequently for a period of time before termination.

For Clients who are receiving legal assistance and no other services from WCC – discharge planning will take place following the legal proceedings for which the client has requested support.

For Clients who are workshop participants only, discharge planning will be discussed at the end of the workshop or workshop(s) that the client participates in.

When a client file is terminated, the client should be told that if she wishes to return for more services, she is welcome to do so at a later date.

Where the reason for termination is client drop out or missing appointments, the staff member should make reasonable attempts to reschedule appointments. However, when a pattern of no shows exists, the staff member may choose to use a contract with the client that states that she agrees to regularly attend scheduled sessions or her file will be closed. When it is not possible to contact a client who has dropped out, the file will be closed.

Where the discharge is for behavioural reasons, the client will be clearly told the reason that she is being discharged from our program. She should also be told that when she is willing to behave within the guidelines of the Centre, she may return for service.

If referrals to other agencies / specialized programs are required, the staff member should make the appropriate referral before closing the file. In some cases a file may be left open if the specialized program is short term in nature and if the client is planning to return to WCC once their program is over.

In the case of a client entering a shelter for abused women, the WCC client file will either be suspended or remain open and active while the woman is in the shelter.

Counsellors should be careful that clients are not receiving counselling from too many sources at the same time as this can be very confusing for them.

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Staff members will complete a Discharge Summary when closing a client file. This form is included in the WISH Database. There is one for Counselling and one for Transition Support. Once completed, it should be printed from WISH and fastened in the client file on the left side of the folder.

Discharge Summaries must also be completed for people who are only attending workshops and not receiving any other services at WCC. However, the discharge summary will be completed when it becomes evident that the client has completed attending our workshop series and not at the end of each specific workshop.