

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Eight Community Service Agencies Walk Together to Tackle Urgent Mental Health Needs in Thunder Bay and District.

Free mental health counselling and support is now available daily across the city and District.

Thunder Bay, ON, May 2, 2022 – It's Mental Health Week in Canada and eight local community service agencies have come together to improve access to mental health counselling and support in Thunder Bay and District. FREE walk-in and/or talk-in mental health counselling is now available Monday to Friday, at diverse locations throughout the community, with services offered in French, Cree and Oji-Cree.

Recognizing the critical need to improve access to mental health services and supports, Thunder Bay Counselling and Children's Centre Thunder Bay hosted a meeting of interested agencies to look for new ways to improve services. The outcome of the meeting was a commitment to collaborate as a working group to expand the availability of free walk-in mental health counselling and supports.

The eight participating agencies are:

- Alpha Court
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Catholic Family Development Centre
- Children's Centre Thunder Bay
- Dilico Anishinabek Family Care
- North of Superior Counselling Programs
- Our Kids Count
- Thunder Bay Counselling

Says Nancy Chamberlain, Thunder Bay Counselling; *“Providing quick and safe access to mental health services are among the biggest concerns for people in our community, and the challenges in the system were only escalated during the pandemic. These challenging times have created a pressing need but also new opportunity for local community service agencies to work together in ways we would have never considered before. We are proud to offer the community access to free and immediate walk-in mental health services.”*

As part of the new initiative, a community-wide Walk-in/Talk-in Counselling calendar is being developed. It will list and promote the daily walk-in/talk-in counselling locations and hours of operation. The goal is for people to be able to quickly find a service and walk-in or talk-in immediately for services without an appointment or being put on a wait list.

Says Diane Walker, Children’s Centre Thunder Bay, *“We recognize this is just the beginning to remove barriers and get people the help they need when they need it. As a working group, we are already looking at solutions to expand hours of operation, add new locations, improve cultural supports, and integrate complimentary wrap-around services with additional partners.”*

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Media contact:

Stephanie Ash
Firedog Communications
807-472-5276
stephanie@firedogpr.com