

# STEPS TO TAKE TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD

Being on a waitlist to get your child help can be a fairly unnerving and stressful time. It's great that you're on a list to see someone, but waiting for the call to come in to know when the appointment is scheduled for AND/OR waiting for an appointment that is months away is difficult.

## Waiting for help is hard.

**Please know this: you are not alone** and although the waitlists are long, the mental health sector is working tirelessly. They are overworked and understaffed currently - they're doing the best they can.

This being said, our number one piece of advice is **BE KIND**.

There are a few things you can do to potentially get you in to see someone sooner and to continue to educate yourself while you wait to speak with someone:

- Make sure you're on the **cancellation list**. This is your number one priority.
- **Phone every other day** to give updates on your child and ask about any new openings. Yes - it's a lot of phoning, but it does help get your child in to see someone sooner.
- **Voice your genuine concern** about your child but be honest about the urgency of getting your child in to see someone ASAP. There is a difference between having a child in crisis where you are truly worried about their health and safety and a concern that your child may have been having a difficult time and may require help eventually.
- **Email your mental health clinic with updates** on your child so that they have those emails on file and that you have a trail of information to provide to the caregiver once you make it to your appointment.
- **Ask the school counsellor to phone** on your child's behalf to try to get them in sooner rather than later.
- **Ask your school counsellor to forward any assessments** or paperwork they have to the mental health clinic and psychiatrist you are waiting to see.

- **Ask your school counsellor to write a letter of support** in advocating to get your child in to see a professional sooner rather than later and send it to the mental health clinic or psychiatrist you are waiting to see.

Waitlists can be painful to be on, but you can advocate for your child and try to get them in sooner. Don't worry about "being a bother" - **your child is important and you have the power to advocate for them.**

Again, do all of the above with **kindness, respect and stick-to-it-iveness.**

**Good luck!**