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## Addiction Services for York Region (ASyr) launches new virtual single-session counselling service

**York Region – (August 3rd, 2021)** Addiction Services for York Region (ASyr) is pleased to announce it has launched a free and confidential single-session counselling service that allows people to connect with a counsellor through video link or over the phone within one or two business days.

Rather than waiting for more intensive, multi-session addiction treatment programs, single-session counselling allows adults and youth aged 12 and up to get faster help for their questions and concerns about substance use and addiction.

Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a steady increase in requests for services. ASyr is piloting this program to enable more individuals to get initial help faster, and to provide support and information on available services at ASyr and in the community.

“Whether you have questions about yourself, or you are a concerned parent or friend, our counsellors can share information and strategies on a wide range of topics including substance use, addictions, video gaming, gambling or mental health,” says Susan McGrail, Clinical Director at ASyr. “We can provide details about our more intensive services or make a referral, if needed. With a single counselling session, we can help more people and answer their questions right away.”

After answering a few short registration questions over the phone, anyone in Ontario can access a single-session appointment offered on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons.

A session lasts for up to one hour and can be accessed through a computer or smartphone using a secure and confidential video link sent by email, or over the phone if that is preferred.

During the session, a trained counsellor, such as a registered social worker or psychotherapist, will provide information and support using counselling techniques based on motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural therapy.

“As one of the largest providers of community addiction services in the province, ASyr is always looking for ways to better support people looking for help,” says Penny Marrett, Executive Director at ASyr. “A single counselling session can really benefit and motivate people when they have been given the right information, at the right time.”

Through evaluation and feedback from clients of this new service, ASyr will learn how best it can continue to support individuals affected by addictions using this model of care as one of its offerings.

“With COVID-19, we’ve seen one of our biggest surges in requests for help,” says Marrett. “We are pleased to be able to offer another option on the continuum of supports and services for people that are affected by their own or someone else’s substance use, addiction or problem gambling.”

To book a single session appointment, go to [ASyr’s booking platform](#) or call:

905-841-7007 or 1-800-263-2288 ext. 322.

Monday, Tuesday and Friday: 9am – 5pm | Wednesday & Thursday: 9am – 7pm |

Media Contact:

Penny Marrett, Executive Director, ASYR

(905) 841-7007, ext. 321 or 1-800-263-2288, ext 321

### **About Addiction Services for York Region (ASYR)**

For nearly 40 years, Addiction Services for York Region (ASYR) has been a leading government-funded treatment provider for substance use, problem gambling and concurrent disorders. ASYR provides a wide range of programs and services that address challenges that often co-occur, such as substance use, problem gambling, depression and anxiety. Using a trauma-informed and client-centred approach to care, highly skilled ASYR counselling professionals use best-practices to deliver a range of specialized services for adults, pregnant and parenting mothers, youth and family. Services include substance use programs, withdrawal management, impaired driving, and education and prevention programs for the community, and more.

[ASYR Website](#)

# Virtual Single-Session FAQs:

## What is a Virtual Single-Session?

ASYR is piloting a free, single-session counselling service to provide individuals or their concerned loved ones with quick access to a professional counsellor to answer questions or concerns about addictions or substance use.

A confidential counselling session lasts for up to one hour and you can speak with a counsellor over the phone or through video conference within a day or two.

Virtual single-session is not a crisis hotline. If you or someone you know is experiencing an overdose, call 911 or if experiencing another crisis, call toll free 1-855-310-COPE (2673) or 911.

## Who is eligible for a virtual single counselling session?

Anyone within Ontario can access ASYR's virtual single-session counselling service, however our priority focus will be people living or working within York Region, North York and South Simcoe.

If you are looking for local services, we encourage you to visit [ConnexOntario](#) to find out what services are available near you.

## How is it different from other counselling services?

Research has shown that providing people with even just one counselling session can help them to make informed decisions that can lead to lasting life changes.

For some people, a single session of counselling can help them to make informed choices about whether or not a more intensive, multi-session counselling service, is right for them.

Concerned loved ones can benefit from a single session with a professional counsellor to get some guidance on helping someone they care about get help with an addiction or substance use.

At the present time, our virtual single-session counselling services are offered only through video conference or over the phone.

## How often can I access this counselling service?

To ensure availability and quick appointment times for all those who need the service, individuals are eligible for one single-session. Trained counsellors will help refer clients to more intensive services if necessary.

ASYR is piloting this new service as a way to help more people, faster. Our goal is to schedule sessions within one or two business days, and we will closely monitor how many people are requesting this service and adjust our programming as needed.

## How do I access a Virtual Single-Session?

To book an appointment, go to [ASYR's booking platform](#) or call ASYR: 905-841-7007 or 1-800-263-2288 ext. 322.

Virtual single-session appointments are available Tuesday or Thursday afternoons.

After answering a few registration questions, our staff will schedule you for your appointment with one of our counsellors. You will be emailed a video conferencing link, or you can provide a phone number where the counsellor can reach you at the scheduled time.

## **What can I expect during a counselling session?**

A registered, professional counsellor will connect with you through a video link or call you at the number you provided during registration.

Together, you and the counsellor will discuss and agree on goals for the session. You can expect our counsellors to never judge you and to treat you with respect and kindness. We listen to what your needs are and help you to make informed decisions about next steps.

You are not in this alone. Let's journey together.

## **What happens to my personal information after the session?**

Your personal information is protected by privacy legislation, Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2001 (PIPEDA), and will be collected, used and disclosed by ASYR only for the purposes which you agree upon, unless required by law to release the information or you request, in writing, to share the information.

Please note that to receive this service, the Ministry of Health (MOH) requires ASYR to enter some client information into an on-line information database called Catalyst, including your personal identification, presenting problems and services received from our agency.

However, any personal identifying information, such as your name, contact information or presenting problems can only be accessed by ASYR. None of our funding sources, organizations, service providers or individuals have access to any of your confidential data. All data in the Catalyst database is bound by confidentiality agreements in accordance with the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA). Any data or information received by the stakeholders from Catalyst, including Ontario Health would not include client identifying information. The same level of encryption (data security) that applies to Catalyst, applies to the case notes module of Catalyst.

Except as specifically described above or as required by law, ASYR will not release your personal information to other organizations/individuals unless you first give permission for us to do so.

If you have any concerns or questions about the privacy or confidentiality of your information, you may contact our Clinical Director at our main office, 14785 Yonge Street, Suite 210, Aurora, ON L4G 1N1.