

Places to Search:

See Practitioner Directories below, check local directories for government funded organizations, and check with your employer for information regarding EAP or coverage for counselling.

Find Practitioner Directories:

- psychologytoday.com/ca
- theravive.com

Find Local Organizations:

- connexontario.ca
- 211ontario.ca

What Do All Those Initials Mean?



Marriage and Family Therapists (RMFT)	Experience with couples and families and registered with Ontario Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (OAMFT)
Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC)	Have fulfilled requirements through a Canadian body to be a counsellor
Registered Psychotherapist (RP)	Ontario has regulated the act of providing psychotherapy
Social Worker	(BSW) Bachelor of Social Work, (MSW) Master of Social Work, (RSW) Registered Social Worker Regulated through the Ontario College
Psychologist	Someone who (in most cases) has completed a PhD in Psychology and has met the requirements to register with the Ontario College of Psychologists
Psychological Associate	Master's level completion and requirements similar to that of a Psychologist
Psychiatrist	Has a medical degree with a specialty in psychi-atrics. Primarily manages psychiatric medica-tions, rarely will provide therapy

A Guide to Finding Fit



Book Your Appointment Pathfinding Today

First Things First

Finding a Match

Counselling is a highly personal experience and it is important that you find a counsellor that you feel comfortable working with. This professional relationship, like all others, is built on trust. When you feel comfortable you will do the best work.

Many counsellors offer free consultations as a way for people to get to know them. This provides you with an opportunity to ask questions and meet in person to get a "sense and feeling" of the counsellor, and also gain enough information about their services to make an informed decision.

Two questions to consider are:

1. Do I feel that this person truly hears and sees me?
2. Is there any part of me that wants to go back for more sessions?

If your answer to either of these is no, then it's likely not a good match.

A good match with a competent counsellor will provide you with a deep sense that what you are saying is important and that your thoughts and feelings are valuable. Counselling is challenging in many ways and is not easy or entirely comfortable. Therefore, you may find some small part of you that feels a little anxious or ambivalent.

However, the right fit with a counsellor should also leave you feeling encouraged and affirmed in spite of the mini-mal discomfort you experience. Keep looking until you get that inner gut sense that you are being understood and validated. Above all else, trust yourself!

An Effective & Competent Counsellor Will:

- Believe you
- Share information about the process of counselling and change
- Fully respect your feelings, beliefs, and values
- Acknowledge gender, culture, and religious differences
- Encourage you to do things that you feel are helpful in your healing journey
- Encourage you to build relational support outside of counselling by connecting with supportive and respectful people and groups
- Offer you new skills to help you move towards your goals
- Invite your feedback regarding the ways in which counselling isn't helpful
- Make it easy for you to discuss any concerns you have about counselling
- Not force or pressure you into doing anything you don't want to do
- Assist you in deciding when counselling is over
- Ask questions

	<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Private Practitioners Look for directors and community listings	- Shorter wait times - Sometimes covered by employee health plans	- Can be costly
Government Funded Organizations	- Often offer sliding scale - Open to the public	- Longer waitlists - Could have a session cap
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Providers <i>Could be an option if your employee health plan doesn't cover counselling.</i>	- Usually offer a hotline for immediate assistance and can be connected with sessions - For both employee and families	- Offer limited number of sessions at a time - Option only for employees of companies who provide this

Shopping Around

Unfortunately, when we are in the grip of crisis we really don't feel like shopping around, we just want to get rid of the problem. But taking the time to find a good match with a counsellor can save you time, money, and disappointment.

Ways to Find Them: Most often, word of mouth and recommendations from those you trust are useful (i.e. a close friend, a physician, or a pastor/rabbi/minister). You may also find them through professional listings and web directories or directly from professional associations, which provide free referrals over the phone and via their web sites. Also, many employee extended health plans include counselling services.

Sliding Scale: Many practitioners and organizations will provide what is called a "sliding scale". This is an option for those with lower incomes. If this is the case for you, inquire about this option with a prospective counsellor.

Having some questions in mind during an in-person consultation will help you to get to know the professional you are seeking services from. Here are some questions to consider:

- What is your training?
- Do you belong to a professional association?
- Have you worked with other individuals facing similar concerns, problems, or goals?
- How long have you been in practice?
- What are your beliefs about the use of medication?
- Do you keep clinical records and can I see them at any time?
- What are your fees, and how and when do I pay?