

COUPLES COUNSELLING

Where to go when you're looking for help

About couples counselling

If you are having difficulties in an intimate relationship and efforts to resolve them with your partner aren't working, couples counselling is an option worth considering. Couples therapists are specially trained in helping couples talk through problems and conflicts that can arise in relationships. A skilled couples therapist is able to make both partners feel safe in the therapy room, without taking sides. He or she will work to create a "space" where both of you feel able to speak openly, and where you can work toward hearing the other person's point of view without getting triggered. Ideally, with the therapist's help, you will find some common ground and end up in a stronger position to move forward together in your relationship.

Approaches to couples counselling

There is a range of different approaches to couples counselling. Most approaches are short-term and focus on finding a solution to negative patterns that have developed in the relationship. Choosing a therapist will depend on your concerns and the approach you feel comfortable with. It will also depend on the connection you both make with the particular therapist you choose: a good fit with the therapist is an important factor in the success of any therapy.

One approach that research has found to be particularly effective is emotionally focused therapy (EFT). EFT couples therapists aim to help each person see the real feelings that lie behind their own, or their partner's, angry or negative words and actions. When this happens, it allows the partners to break the negative cycle and reconnect with each other in a kinder way. The Toronto Centre for Emotionally Focused Therapy website lists EFT therapists across the GTA (see page 3).

Who provides couples counselling and how to get it

Psychotherapy, including couples counselling, is provided by a variety of regulated health care workers including registered psychotherapists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, psychiatrists, general practitioners (GPs) and occupational therapists.

If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please email the information to us at access.resources@camh.ca.

This resource list is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by CAMH or guarantee any particular outcome.

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Treatment from a psychiatrist or GP is covered by public health insurance (such as OHIP in Ontario), and will not cost you anything. Other mental health care providers, such as registered psychologists, registered social workers and registered psychotherapists may also be free if they work in government-funded hospitals, clinics, agencies or an employee assistance program. But if they work in a private practice, their services will not be covered by OHIP, and you may have to pay. If you have an employer-provided or private health insurance plan, part or all of your therapy fees may be covered. Sometimes you can get couples counselling for a reduced fee when working with a student.

Most clinics accept self-referrals; others may require a referral from a family physician.

Because private counselling can be very expensive, most of the following listings are either fully or partially covered by OHIP, or offered on a sliding scale that considers your income and financial circumstances.

For additional information, refer to “Looking for Mental Health Services? What You Need to Know” (CAMH, 2017).

If you are interested in exploring psychotherapy in general, please see the separate sheet “Psychotherapy: Finding a Therapist.”

Organizations and Sites for Finding Couples Counselling

Ontario Association for Marriage & Family Therapy

<https://oamft.com/>

Services offered: Online directory of couples and family therapists. Click on “Find a therapist” and then the city in Ontario where you are seeking a therapist.

Fee: Varies by therapist

Ontario Psychotherapy & Counselling Program

<https://referrals.psychotherapyandcounseling.ca/>

Niagara region: 905 682-3064

Elsewhere in Ontario: 416 920-9355

Services offered: Online referral to psychotherapy by senior students and qualified graduate therapists across Ontario.

Fee: Most therapists range from \$60 to \$120 a session; less for student therapists.

Note: If you prefer, you can call their referral line rather than submitting the online form.

Psychology Today

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/therapists>

Services offered: On the website, type in the name of your community in the search box. Then, on the results page, scroll down to the heading “How can I tell if a therapist is right for me?” and click on “marriage counsellor” or “couples counselling”

Fee: Varies by therapist

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Toronto Centre for Emotionally Focused Therapy

www.greatertorontoeft.com/

Services offered: Online directory of therapists across the GTA. To find a therapist, click “For couples,” then “Find a therapist” and search by location: GTA Central, West, East or North

Fee: Varies by therapist

Toronto Institute for Relational Psychotherapy

www.tirp-lowcost-therapy.ca/

Services offered: Low-cost therapy provided by senior students and graduates of the Toronto Institute for Relational Psychotherapy. The website lists all participating therapists with their contact details. Click on “Couples therapy”

Fee: \$40 for the first session, then a negotiated fee of \$40 to \$80 a session.

Toronto Region: Community Resources (free or sliding scale)

Family Service Toronto

128A Sterling Rd., Ste. 202, Toronto, ON

<https://familyservicetoronto.org>

416 595-9618

Services offered: Couple counselling (along with individual counselling and other specialized services)

Eligibility: Anyone living or working in Toronto

Referral: Self-referral

Fees: Fees are on a sliding scale based on income

Note: Several locations across Toronto

Languages: English, Farsi, French, Spanish, Tagalog and occasionally other languages.

Gestalt Clinic

Locations across Toronto, Kitchener, Burlington, Port Credit and Stouffville

gestalt.on.ca/low-cost-therapy-clinic

416 964-9464

Services offered: Low-cost couples (and other) therapy from students in training who have at least four years of experience

Referral: Self-referral

Fees: \$40 per session

Languages: Depends on therapists currently registered with the clinic

Jewish Family & Child Services

4600 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON

www.jfandcs.com/counselling

416 638-7800

Services offered: Couples (and other)

Fees: Sliding scale

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Medical Clinic for Person-Centered Psychotherapy

265 Yorkland Blvd., Ste. 403, Toronto, ON

Locations across GTA

www.medicalpsychclinic.org

416 229-2399

Services offered: Couples therapy provided by a psychiatrist (along with other types of therapy provided by GPs)

Eligibility: Adults

Referral: Physician referral required, form can be found online

Fees: Covered by OHIP

Note: Waitlist is six to eight weeks

Sherbourne Health Centre, Counselling Services

333 Sherbourne St., Toronto, ON

sherbourne.on.ca/counselling-services

416 324-4180 ext. 5310

Services offered: Couples (and other) counselling

Eligibility: People over 18 with a postal code that begins with “M”; priority populations are people who identify as LGBTQ+, homeless and newcomers

Referral: Self-referral

Fees: Free for clients who cannot afford to obtain mental health counselling services elsewhere

Note: Average waitlist is three to six months

Halton Region

Thrive Counselling

Locations in Burlington, Oakville, Milton and Georgetown

thrivecounselling.org

905 845-3811 (Oakville)

905 637-5256 (Burlington)

Services offered: Couples (and other) counselling

Eligibility: All residents of Halton Region

Referral: Self-referral

Fees: Sliding scale

Languages: May include English, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Arabic, Romanian, Pashto, Dari

Peel Region

Family Services of Peel

151 City Centre Dr., Ste. 501, Mississauga, ON

fspeel.org

905 453-5775

Services offered: Couples (and other) counselling

Eligibility: Anyone living or working in the Region of Peel

Referral: Self-referral

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Fees: Sliding scale

Languages: Services provided in more than 20 languages

Catholic Family Services

10 Kingsbridge Garden Circle, Unit 400, Mississauga, ON

60 West Dr., Unit 201, Brampton, ON

www.cfspd.com/counselling.html

905 450-1608 (Brampton)

905 897-1644 (Mississauga)

905 450-1608 ext. 112 (intake)

Services offered: Couples (and other) counselling

Eligibility: All ages

Referral: Walk-in clinic to access other services and longer-term counselling

Fees: First free session is free; sliding scale for long-term counselling

Note: Multiple languages, child minding available

Durham Region

Durham Region Community Counselling

Locations throughout Durham Region

www.durham.ca/en/living-here/counselling.aspx?_mid_=24458

905 666-6240

Services offered: Short-term, solution-focused couples (and other) counselling

Eligibility: Residents of Durham Region

Referral: Self-referrals through the intake line

Fees: \$90 for a 50-minute session; fees can be adjusted with a sliding scale

York Region

Family Services York Region Markham

4261 Highway 7, Ste. 203, Unionville, ON

fsyr.ca/our-services

905 415-9719

Services offered: Couples (and other) counselling

Eligibility: Age requirements vary by program

Referral: Self-referral

Fees: Sliding scale offered based on income and ability to pay; first consultation session is \$120, online counselling is \$65

Languages: Counselling is offered in multiple languages