

So... wanna talk?

Finding a counsellor or psychotherapist

If in crisis or needing to talk to someone immediately, call **211** and ask for a crisis line (e.g. Distress Line, Gerstein Centre, Assaulted Women's Helpline, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre).

For longer term counselling...

1) Consider what you want. What are your goals in speaking to someone? Do you have any preferences in where the counsellor is coming from? (e.g. Perhaps you'd be more comfortable with someone who shares a cultural, linguistic, gender, spiritual, political, religious background with you. Perhaps you want someone familiar with certain issues, e.g. transgender, queer/LGBTQ, immigration, HIV, etc. Or perhaps it doesn't matter.). Knowing what you're looking for will help you find it!

2) Consider your budget and how you value this healing process.

I know it may seem odd to pay \$90 per hour to talk to someone, but consider that many psychotherapists are highly trained in helping you untangle and move through stuck mental-emotional patterns. From a Chinese medicine point of view, this can have an incredibly dramatic effect on your health. Emotions are one of the most important causes of 'imbalance/dis-ease' among adults. You're worth it!

If you're really on a limited budget, there are practitioners who offer sliding scale options. There are also community health centres, non-profit agencies, psychotherapy training centres, and other organizations that offer free or very inexpensive counselling services. Check out my resources below for tips.

3) Ask around. People in your circles may be the best resources to finding a suitable therapist in your area, or who caters to your particular values/culture/background/geographic location. Of course, still check out their recommendation first, as what works for someone else may not work for you!

4) Research. Go on the internet. Make informational phone calls. I've included a few resources below to get you started, but these are BY NO MEANS exhaustive.

5) Try it out. Each counsellor has a slightly different approach, style, etc. that may or may not work for you. Don't be afraid to ask about an initial consultation/interview (usually free), and ask the counsellor about their training, experience, approach, fee policies, etc.

6) Speak up! Often we may feel vulnerable when sharing personal details with someone we haven't learned to trust yet. Trust your instincts; respect yourself and wherever you're at. Speak to your counsellor if something about your sessions doesn't work for you, and try to figure out an approach that would work better for you. If after speaking to them about the problem, you need to switch to another counsellor, don't feel bad. It just may not be the best fit, and that is perfectly normal. Above all, you need to do what's right for you!

Some Resources to Get You Started

(1) Call **211** for referrals to community agencies and community health centres that provide counselling services, often for specific populations (e.g. issues, language, culture, sexual orientation, etc.). Ask for your local **community health centre** as many offer counselling as well. Some places will do short-term counselling. Many services are free and some are sliding scale, though they may have waitlists.

On **211toronto.ca**, the website for 211, look up “counselling” or “psychotherapy”, specific terms such as “queer” or specific agencies such as: Women' Health in Women's Hands, Sherbourne Health Centre, Planned Parenthood, Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, Family Services Toronto, OISE, Women's College Hospital, St Joseph's Women's Clinic, 519 Church Street Community Centre, etc.

(2) Some Medical Doctors offer psychotherapy that is covered by OHIP. You can check the **GP Psychotherapy Association** at www.gppaonline.ca, or call 416-221-7949. Some examples:

Bloor Clinic Psychotherapy and Counselling
OHIP-covered, need doctor's referral
416-516-6969

Medical Clinic for Psychotherapy
OHIP-covered
416-236-0248

(3) Call psychotherapy and counselling training **schools**, which often offer inexpensive sessions with their graduates or students. A few examples:

Centre for Training in Psychotherapy 416-964-3690
Toronto Institute for Relational Psychotherapy (www.tirp.ca). 416-465-2392
Gestalt Institute (gestalt.on.ca). 416-964-9464, extension 63
Living Institute (www.livinginstitute.org) 416-515-0404. Free initial consultation with senior therapists.

(4) Some other **ideas** (this list is provided for your convenience. It is NOT exhaustive, there are many more therapists out there, and I cannot guarantee the quality of the services):

Counselling / social work is available at **Six Degrees Acupuncture** on a sliding scale:
<http://pokeme.ca/services-and-treatments>

Michel'e Bertrand, M.Ed CCC: helps people strengthen their relationships and their emotional life. Located at Bloor and Christie. Reduced fees available for a number of spots. 416-939-0238. www.bertrandcounselling.com.

Lindsay Elin, MSW, RSW: offers individual and family therapy to adults, youth and children at Bloor and Spadina or from a wheelchair accessible office near Yonge and Eglinton. Sliding scale available. 647-204-2047. <http://lindsayelinpsychotherapy.com/>