



Finding a Therapist

There are as many different types of therapists as there are types of problems. The result for you as you look for help can be confusion and frustration. This document is for you. We hope that you will be able to use it as a guide as you negotiate the “Finding A Therapist Maze”. Psychotherapy or counselling is a therapeutic partnership between someone experiencing emotional difficulties and a mental health professional. It is a contractual agreement between the therapist and the client for the purposes of supporting the client through a problem solving and healing process.

The psychotherapist/counsellor brings knowledge and skill to the therapeutic relationship. The primary role of the counsellor is to provide the safety, containment and guidance that is necessary in order to make sure that you feel supported and secure in the important work that you are doing.

Remember that the therapist is actually working for you. The work that you do together must be done as a team if you are to be successful in your journey.

Before you begin make sure that you know what you want. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- How much can I afford to pay?
- How long do I want to be in therapy?
- Do I want therapy that is interactive?
- Do I want therapy that is more analytical and less interactive?
- Is the therapist's office in a location that I feel comfortable with?
- How often do I want to see the therapist?

There are a few good questions that you can ask. All therapists should be willing to answer them. If they won't, move on! Buyer beware. There are lots of people who claim to be therapists but who do not have the credentials or professional memberships to support the claim. When you are making your first exploratory phone calls:

Ask these questions

- What's your education?
- What's your professional / clinical training?
- Do you have experience in treating mood disorders?
- Are you a member of a professional association or college?
- How long have you been practicing?
- Do you have experience with my specific problem?
- What are your fees?
- How many sessions do you think it will take to reach my goals?
- Can we work as a team to set the goals for my therapy?
- Do you have a waiting list?

Make sure that you write down the responses in order to review them later. As you ask the questions check how you feel about the responses. Your “gut” feelings about the person on the other end of the phone shouldn't be ignored. Pay attention to the “ease” or “dis-ease” that you feel as you go through your checklist. A good thing to do is to rank your gut feeling from 1-5.

1. I felt really uncomfortable with this one.
2. I felt moderately comfortable with this one.
3. I felt comfortable with this one.
4. I felt very comfortable with this one.
5. This is the one for me.

Once you have ranked your gut feeling, review the other questions to make sure that the therapist is a fit. Now you can make an appointment. You will know that the therapist you have chosen is the right one within the first two to three sessions.

The Mood Disorders Association of Ontario provides support, information and education as a complement to traditional and alternative therapies. MDAO services are not intended as a replacement for other treatment options and encourages individuals to seek treatment by a qualified health professional.

Mood Disorders Association of Ontario (MDAO)

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Here are some questions to ask yourself after the first couple of sessions:

- Am I beginning to trust this therapist?
- Does the therapist seem to understand me?
- Do I feel at ease with the therapist even though it's a difficult situation?
- Are the fees okay?
- Is the location good?
- Do I feel comfortable in the therapist's office?
- Can the therapist accommodate my schedule needs?
- Do I feel that we make a good team?
- Do I feel heard?
- Do I feel supported?

Make sure that you feel comfortable. Remember, this is an important and courageous step that you have taken and you need to be on the journey with someone that you know you can count on.

If you don't feel that you and the therapist are a good fit, let him/her know. Some problems can be resolved but sometimes it's just a matter of "mismatched personality". This is no one's fault but will require you to find a different counsellor.

If you do need to find a new therapist ask your current therapist to help you by providing some names of other therapists. He/she should be able to accommodate this request.

How much will this cost me?

- OHIP covers Psychiatrists and Medical Doctors.
- Psychologists and Clinical Social Workers aren't covered by OHIP but are often covered by private or company insurance policies.
- Fees can range from as low as \$0.00 per hour at public agencies all the way up to \$160+ per hour. Some therapists have a sliding fee scale.

It's important to know that there are lots of people who call themselves therapists or counsellors. The price for services isn't a gauge of the quality of service.

You are the gauge and you will know which therapy fits best for you.

Therapy can be the key to unlocking all of your hidden potential. You need to respect and trust your ability to choose the right counsellor. Once you've done that, the work may be difficult but you will succeed.

You're worth it!

Where can I start to look?

TRADITIONAL

College of Physicians and Surgeons:

Telephone: 416.967.2603
Toll free: 1.800.268.7096 ext. 306
Website: www.cpso.on.ca

G.P. Psychotherapy Association:

Telephone: 416.410.6644

Ontario Association of Social Workers:

Telephone: 416.923.4848
Website: www.oasw.org

Ontario College of Social Workers:

Telephone: 416.972.9882
Toll free 1.877.828.9380
Website: www.ocswssw.org

Ontario Psychological Association:

Telephone: 416.961.5552
Toll free: 1.800.268.0069
Website: www.psych.on.ca

ALTERNATIVE

Friends of Alternative & Complementary Therapies (FACT):

Telephone: 416.299.5113
Website: www.thefacts.org

You're on your way

You've done a lot of work to get here. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at MDAO. We'll be happy to support you through this complicated but important decision-making process.

Note: *The Mood Disorders Association of Ontario does not recommend individual therapists.*

