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If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please email the information to us at access.resources@camh.ca.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

This resource list is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by CAMH or guarantee any particular outcome.
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.jfandes.com/counselling
416 638-7800
Services offered: Couples (and other)
Fees: Sliding scale

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

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

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