

Counselling: Frequently Asked Questions

This document answers the most commonly asked questions about counselling at Heritage Community Fitness & Rehabilitation Centre. If you have a question that we haven't answered in this document, please don't hesitate to contact us.

What are the credentials of the counsellors at Heritage Community Fitness & Rehabilitation Centre?

The Collaborative Care Centre at Heritage Fitness has two therapists available to help with individual mental health concerns and/or family and couple's counselling.

Lina Masood, MSW/RSW, Psychotherapist

Lina Masood is a bilingual Clinical Social Worker (MSW, RSW) with extensive training and over 15 years' experience working with individual, couples, and families. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master Degree in Social Work from the University of Ottawa. Lina's clinical interests include, but are not limited to, working with persons affected by crisis and trauma, loss/bereavement, anxiety, adjustment disorders, self-esteem, adaptation and reintegration, attachment, and couple's counselling. **Lina's approach:** *Lina provides compassionate and evidence-based therapy that includes the use of EFT (Emotionally Focused Therapy), CBT (Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy,) Solution Focused, DBT (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy), Interpersonal Psychotherapy, Mindfulness, Psychodynamic, and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing).*

Trish Stephens, MA, Registered Psychotherapist (Qual.)

Trish Stephens is a Registered Psychotherapist (Qual.) and Master of Arts in counselling graduate. She dedicated eight months of her Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology (MACP) working in the Forensic Mental Health Unit of the North Bay Regional Hospital. Her time at the Hospital allowed her to work with inpatients with serious mental illness develop strategies to cope with issues of depression, anxiety, addiction, trauma, stigma, loss/grief, positive social interaction, healthy relationships, and personal boundaries. **Trish's approach:** *Trish takes a collaborative approach to treatment. She works alongside her clients to develop their plan for growth, empowerment, and positive change. She listens to, understands, and supports her clients through evidence-based therapies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Psychodynamic, Solution Focused, Narrative, and Mindfulness.*

What is the difference between the types of mental health specialists?

This is a great question and one that comes up often. In short,

psychiatrists are medical doctors who specialize in mental health. Their services are covered by OHIP, they can prescribe medication, and often require a referral from a general practitioner/family doctor.



psychologists provide assessment, treatment, and prevention of behavioural and mental conditions. They diagnose neuropsychological disorders and dysfunctions as well as psychotic, neurotic, and personality disorders and dysfunctions. In addition, psychologists and psychological associates use a variety of approaches directed toward the maintenance and enhancement of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and interpersonal functioning.

The College of Psychologists of Ontario regulates the profession of psychology in Ontario. [Learn more about the College on their website.](#) Their services are often covered by personal or workplace insurance providers.

social workers assess, diagnose, treat, and evaluate individual, interpersonal, and societal problems using social work knowledge, skills, interventions, and strategies to assist individuals, dyads, families, groups, organizations, and communities achieve optimum psychosocial and social functioning.

The College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers regulates the profession of Social Work in Ontario. [Learn more about the College on their website.](#) Their services are often covered by personal or workplace insurance providers.

Members of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) are authorized to perform the controlled act of psychotherapy in compliance the Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998, its regulations and bylaws. Therefore, Registered Social Workers can also use the title of psychotherapist.

Psychotherapists provide assessment and treatment of cognitive, emotional and/or behavioural disturbances by psychotherapeutic means, delivered through a therapeutic relationship based primarily on verbal or non-verbal communication.

The College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario regulates the profession of Psychotherapists in Ontario. [Learn more about the College on their website.](#) Their services are more and more being covered by personal or workplace insurance providers.

Do I need a referral for making a counselling appointment?

No referral is necessary to make an appointment to see a counsellor. Some healthcare insurance plans require a medical referral to accept a claim.

What can I expect to happen during my first appointment?

Sessions are 50-minutes in length. The first session is an opportunity to discuss the issue for which you are seeking guidance. You will be asked to share the history of the issue and engage in an open and honest conversation about the issue(s) for which you are seeking guidance. Honesty is an integral part of the counselling process.

Am I signing up for a long-term treatment plan when I seek the help of a counsellor?

Not necessarily. All issues require the development of a strategy that you agree with, be it short term or long term. Some individuals find only a couple of sessions are necessary while others prefer to seek treatment for a longer period. Counselling is a collaborative process. The important thing to note is that you are always in control of your own care; how you decide to proceed is up to you.

Who benefits from counselling?

Most everyone will benefit from counselling. Individuals often seek the guidance of a counsellor for issues around family, self-confidence, anxiety, depression, food- and weight-related issues, and more. Couples also benefit from counselling to help resolve trust issues, communication, child-rearing issues, and more. In short, if something is bothering you that you can't get past or want support on how to approach a difficult conversation with someone, a counsellor can provide much-needed assistance.

I know someone in need of counselling. How can I help them?

Think of mental health as a continuum. Our mental health fluctuates and changes, moving back and forth along that continuum, including being healthy, reacting, injured, or ill. People can move through all or just a few of these phases at different points in life. Mental health and mental illness can look different for each of us, so it is important not to try and diagnose others or force them to seek help.

If you think someone may be struggling, experiencing stress, or mental health distress, you can help by providing support, normalizing seeking help, and referring them to appropriate resources. Responding with care and concern are critical factors in supporting a healthy community.

1. **Recognize the signs:** Trust your instincts and pay attention to different or worrisome behaviours.
2. **Respond:** Ask about their well-being during a one-on-one conversation. Be specific about your concerns when speaking with the person.
3. **Guide to appropriate resources and support:** Listen openly and non-judgmentally. Ask questions to help gather information and understand their situation. Acknowledge their thoughts and feelings in a compassionate way and offer hope. Encourage the person to connect with available resources as soon as possible. Early help-seeking may support improved outcomes. Provide information about available resources and services. Show the person that you care by offering to follow-up with the person. Respect their decision to accept or refuse assistance, except in situations where you are concerned about a risk of harm. In situations of imminent risk of harm, contact 9-1-1.

Continue reading about mental health on [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#) website.

Do you have an issue that is disrupting your life? Do you want to improve your emotional health and move beyond unhealthy habits? We can help. Contact us today to book a counselling appointment.

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