### CHOOSING A COUNSELLOR

YOU'RE READY FOR COUNSELLING BUT HOW DO YOU FIND THE RIGHT COUNSELLOR? CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING...

## DEFINING WHAT YOU NEED

CLARIFY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
PROFESSIONS LIKE PSYCHIATRISTS,
PSYCHOLOGISTS, COUNSELLORS AND
THERAPISTS SO YOU CAN MAKE SURE
YOU'RE SEEING THE RIGHT PROFESSION!

A PSYCHIATRIST IS A MEDICAL DOCTOR TRAINED SPECIFICALLY IN MENTAL HEALTH. YOU'LL WANT TO SEE A PSYCHIATRIST IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A PRESCRIPTION FOR MEDICATIONS.

A PSYCHOLOGIST HAS THEIR PHD, CAN ADMINISTER CERTAIN ASSESSMENTS AND CAN DIAGNOSE MENTAL ILLNESSES BUT CANNOT PRESCRIBE MEDICATION. THEY WILL OFTEN PROVIDE TALK THERAPY AS WELL

A COUNSELLOR IS SOMEONE TRAINED IN MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES AND MODALITIES. THIS IS USUALLY THE PROFESSION PEOPLE MEAN WHEN THEY ARE THINKING OF GOING AND TALKING TO SOMEONE ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COUNSELLOR AND A THERAPIST IS SIMPLY A REGIONAL CHOICE. IN BC, THE TERM COUNSELLOR IS USED, BUT IN OTHER PLACES, THEY PREFER THE TERM THERAPIST.

FIRSTLY, MAKE SURE ANY COUNSELLORS
YOU ARE LOOKING AT HAS A MASTERS
DEGREE. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF
DIFFERENT MASTERS DEGREES THAT ARE
APPROPRIATE, SUCH AS A MASTERS OF
ARTS IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY
(MACP), A MASTER OF EDUCATION IN
COUNSELLING (MED) OR A MASTERS OF
SOCIAL WORK (MSW).

NEXT, MAKE SURE THAT THE COUNSELLOR IS REGISTERED WITH A GOVERNING BODY. IN BC, WE HAVE THE BC ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL COUNSELLORS, WHERE REGISTERED MEMBERS ARE CALLED REGISTERED CLINICAL COUNSELLORS (RCC).

IN CANADA, WE HAVE THE CANADIAN.
COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY
ASSOCIATION, WHERE REGISTERED
MEMBERS ARE CALLED CANADIAN CERTIFIED
COUNSELLORS (CCC).

HAVING ONE OF THESE DESIGNATIONS
MEANS THAT A REGULATORY BODY ENSURES
THE COUNSELLOR HAS A CERTAIN LEVEL OF
EDUCATION/TRAINING AND THAT THE
COUNSELLOR FOLLOWS ETHICAL
GUIDELINES.

# CREDENTIALS AND EDUCATION

#### **BENEFITS**

COUNSELLORS ARE EXTENSIVELY TRAINED TO HANDLE THE MOST COMMON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS ISSUES THAT ARISE.
THESE INCLUDE ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, STRESS AND GRIEF. THERE ARE SOME ISSUES THOUGH THAT NEED ADDITIONAL TRAINING.

IF YOU ARE SEEKING SUPPORT FOR TRAUMA, ADDICTIONS OR COUPLES COUNSELLING, I RECOMMEND MAKING SURE THE COUNSELLOR HAS SPECIFIC TRAINING IN THESE AREAS.
FOR TRAUMA, LOOK FOR EMDR OR SOMATIC EXPERIENCING TRAINING.
FOR ADDICTIONS OR COUPLES WORK, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF TRAININGS IN THESE AREAS, SO JUST LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL COURSES OR EXPERIENCE.

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE THE ONE CHOOSING THE COUNSELLOR, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND! AS SUCH, FEEL FREE TO ASK THEM ABOUT THEIR TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE THE RIGHT COUNSELLOR FOR YOU! IF YOU HAVE BENEFITS, NOTE THAT EACH BENEFITS PROVIDER HAS THEIR OWN RULES AS TO WHAT CREDENTIALS THEY WILL COVER. AS SUCH, BE SURE TO CHECK WHAT CREDENTIALS YOURS WILL COVER.

MOST COUNSELLORS ASK THAT YOU PAY FOR YOUR SESSION UPFRONT AND THEN SUBMIT IT TO YOUR BENEFITS PROVIDER FOR REIMBURSEMENT.

## AREAS OF FOCUS

### THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

ONCE YOU CONSIDER THE AREAS ABOVE, A HUGE FACTOR TO CONSIDER IS THE CONNECTION YOU FEEL TO THE COUNSELLOR.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP, OR HOW COMFORTABLE, SAFE AND OPEN YOU FEEL WITH YOUR COUNSELLOR, IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN HOW WELL YOU DO IN THERAPY.

THERE'S NO ONE WAY TO DETERMINE IF YOU WILL HAVE A STRONG THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH A COUNSELLOR. TRY VIEWING THEIR WEBSITE OR SOCIAL MEDIA TO SEE IF WHAT THEY'VE POSTED RESONATES WITH YOU. YOU COULD ALSO ASK FOR A QUICK PHONE CALL TO CHAT WITH THEM BRIEFLY AS THIS MAY HELP YOU DETERMINE FIT.

#### WEBSITES TO FIND A COUNSELLOR

THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES ARE FANTASTIC PLACES TO BEGIN YOUR SEARCH FOR A COUNSELLOR AS THEY ALL ENSURE THAT THE COUNSELLORS WHO ARE LISTED ON THESE SITES HAVE PROPER CREDENTIALS. YOU WILL STILL WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT THE COUNSELLOR HAS THE DESIGNATIONS THAT YOUR INSURANCE BENEFITS COVER. REMEMBER TO LOOK FOR SPECIAL TRAINING IN THE AREAS OF FOCUS LISTED ABOVE.

WWW.PSYCHOLOGYTODAY.COM/CA/THERAPISTS
WWW.BC-COUNSELLORS.ORG/COUNSELLORS/
WWW.CCPA-ACCP.CA/FIND-A-CANADIAN-CERTIFIED-COUNSELLOR/

