



Finding appropriate counsellors or therapists to support you, connect with your class, or work with individual students is not always easy, but it's always possible. The process will likely be different in different communities.

There are many types of therapists. Some may only do individual counselling, others work with groups, or in particular programs, some work with a combination of these. They may use different modalities, such as drugs, talk therapy, narrative, drama, touch, meditation or creative arts. They may also draw on different theoretical frameworks to support their approaches; exploring a variety of possibilities may be helpful. If you are thinking of bringing someone into your class or recommending them to students, ask them some probing questions to make sure they are sensitive to systemic issues such as class, race, and gender and will not overtly or subtly blame victims of violence for their experiences or their reactions.

Encourage learners who are selecting a therapist to ask lots of questions based on what they think might work for them. For example, some may need to know: Does the therapist come from a feminist perspective? If substance use is at issue, does the therapist embrace a harm reduction stance (or in contrast, a zero-tolerance abstinence position)? Remind learners that not going forward with a counseling relationship after one or two meetings is not rude, insulting or a personal issue at all; if it doesn't feel right, it isn't.

Here are a few possibilities of where to start if you need to look outside your own institution to find a counsellor:

1. **Ask around** – ask colleagues, friends, neighbours, and community members to find out what services are available in your community, which ones they recommend, and why.
2. **Check the front of the phone book** (or the Internet) for local help services – such as 211 in Ontario and Nova Scotia. Check phone resources such as rape crisis lines, distress lines, and suicide prevention help. Call to find out what services they provide – phone only, or in-person follow up, how long, how frequently, immediate crisis only or help for past trauma.
3. **Check health services** such as community-health centres, hospital counseling services, and general practitioners. All may offer short or long-

term counseling or keep lists of agencies or individuals offering free counseling or a sliding scale. Some GPs are trained as psychotherapists.

4. **Check community agencies** that have counselors on staff who might be able to work with you or your students for a few hours regularly – for example agencies that work with specific cultural communities, age groups, sexual orientation, or abilities.
5. **Search the Internet** using key words that are relevant to your or learners' needs – for example, therapist + family violence + your location.
6. **Find therapists in private practice** through local registers, advertising, or referral services. Some will donate free sessions or offer special sliding scales to participants in adult literacy programs.
7. **Think creatively** – other explorations might be helpful: artists, drama teachers, or musicians might create healing opportunities for self-expression. Elders from different cultural groups might offer workshops that help participants of all cultural backgrounds to heal.