

## How can I get counselling?

If you, your Family Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatrist, Pharmacist or Dietician think counselling may be helpful, your health care provider will make a referral to our Mental Health Program. The Intake Coordinator from this office will review the referral and call you to discuss counselling options. We try to call within 1-2 weeks.

Make sure the medical centre has your daytime telephone number and let us know if we can leave a detailed message. If you don't have a phone, have concerns about privacy, or are not available by telephone during business hours, please talk about this with your health care provider.

If you're 'not sure' or change your mind about counselling at any time, let your health care provider know.

## How long is this call? What is it for?

The Intake Coordinator may talk with you for up to 20 minutes. If you prefer to meet in person, we can make arrangements. You will briefly discuss your situation and decide on the best counselling option for you. This may involve learning new strategies, group counselling, individual counselling or a combination of options.

## How long will I have to wait?

Wait times vary from a few days to several weeks, and sometimes longer. Urgent referrals are given priority. If you don't think you can wait, please let us know.

When cancelling any appointment, **please give at least 24 hours' notice** so that the appointment time can be offered to another patient.

## What is the cost?

There is no cost to see a Counsellor, Pharmacist, Psychiatrist, Dietician or to attend groups.

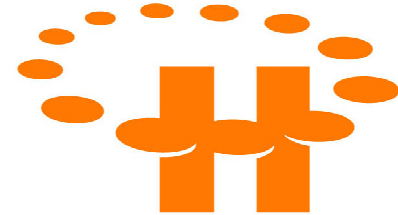
## Are these services available to the public?

Counselling services are available only to patients of Family Doctors in the Hamilton Family Health Team.

**The Intake Coordinator at the King West Medical Centre is:  
Cynthia Forrest,  
RN BScN CPMHN(C)  
You can contact her at:  
(905) 645-1100, ext. 4**

## Hamilton Family Health Team

### Mental Health Program



**Hamilton** Family Health Team

*Better care, together.*

King West Medical Centre  
505 King St. West  
Hamilton, ON L8P 1B9  
Tel: (905) 525-3501

## What is the Hamilton Family Health Team (HFHT)?

Family Health Teams are a key part of the Ontario Government's plan to improve access to health care, reduce wait times and keep Ontarians healthy. The Hamilton Family Health Team is the largest of the 200 Family Health Teams created in Ontario.

The Hamilton Family Health Team is composed of Family Doctors, Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Mental Health Counsellors, Dietitians, Psychiatrists, Pharmacists and other health care professionals. Together, they provide care to more than 260,000 residents in Hamilton and area. For more information, please visit the HFHT website at [www.hamiltonfht.ca](http://www.hamiltonfht.ca).

## What is the HFHT Mental Health Program?

The Hamilton Family Health Team Mental Health Program gives you access to mental health services at your Family Doctor's office. Counsellors, Pharmacists, and Psychiatrists work together with your health care team. You continue to see your Family Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Dietician or Pharmacist while you are seeing a Counsellor. Counsellors will keep them informed of your progress.

## Why get Counselling?

About 1 in 5 Canadians - people of all ages, cultures, and income and education levels - will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives. Mental health problems can affect relationships, work and quality of life.

Common reasons to see a mental health professional include:

- depression
- stress or anxiety
- family problems
- parenting
- divorce/separation
- drug or alcohol problems
- grief
- work-related problems
- many other reasons

## What about seeing a Psychiatrist, Pharmacist or Dietician?

Each practice has a Psychiatrist, Pharmacist and Dietician who visits on a regular basis. They may see patients directly or discuss referrals with other members of your health care team to make suggestions. If you think this may be helpful for you, talk to your health care provider.

## Who are Mental Health Counsellors?

Our Counsellors have special training in mental health. They come from social work, nursing and similar professional backgrounds. They see patients with a wide range of mental health concerns and work with people of all ages, couples and families.

## What can I expect from a Mental Health Counsellor?

In counselling, you set goals and agree on a plan to meet them. Emphasis is on short-term treatment so that more people have access to the service, but people may also be seen for longer periods of time.

Counsellors can answer questions, make suggestions, and provide up-to-date information on a variety of mental health concerns. A Counsellor can also refer you to other programs or services, if appropriate.

The information you discuss with a Counsellor is confidential, except as required or permitted by law. No information is released outside your Doctor's office without your written consent.