

## Be The Author Of Your Own Life: Trinity Down Counselling Centre

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Ordained Anglican priest, Canadian Certified Counsellor, and Registered Marriage and Family Therapist, Allan Studd opened the Trinity Down Counselling Centre in 2006. The centre offers a variety of therapies for personal and confidential one-on-one, family, and relationship counselling. Therapists working there use narrative therapy, solution-focused therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, and experiential therapies, such as art and movement techniques.

“Every person has a story,” Reverend Studd says, “and that story is their own.” Using narrative therapy, the Reverend helps his clients separate themselves from their problems so solutions can be found.

“We have a dominant story about who we are and how we came to be that person,” he explains. By listening to his clients, Reverend Studd is able to help them discover other stories that could also be true about themselves. “There are many other stories you could be telling and centering out. The reason we focus on the main one is often because that is what society has told us about ourselves.”

Solution-focused therapy looks past the problems to help clients move forward while cognitive behaviour therapy helps clients find new ways of problem-solving. Reverend Studd suggests, “If you've been trying to solve the problems in your life the same way, time after time, and always end up with the same result - and it isn't a good result - then maybe it's time to try something a little bit different.”

“Our treatment focuses on the whole person; incorporating the mind, body and spiritual aspects of the individual,” says Registered Social Worker, Hilary Murray. A part-time counsellor with the Trinity Down Counselling Centre, Hilary says the reason people come to them for counselling varies. “What we most commonly see is when an individual or a couple is finding it difficult to effectively resolve issues on their own, or they find that they're not able to move past an issue. Other times, people come into therapy to explore specific aspects of their lives.”

Reverend Studd adds that some clients are referred by their family doctors while others come in to deal with issues of mental illness, depression, stress, anger, breakdown of relationships, or difficulties at work.

One advantage for Reverend Studd's clients is that his services can be covered by Employee Assistance Programs. Clients can access counselling services through one of their employee benefits, which covers up to eight free sessions. This assistance also allows the client's family members to receive counselling, which Reverend Studd explains, is very important. “If a person is dealing with anger, depression, or other issues, the people around them are also going to be affected.”

Both Reverend Studd and Hilary have a strong sense of spirituality and the importance it plays in the lives of human beings. While clients come from all spiritual backgrounds, Reverend Studd says, “Religion and spirituality is just one resource that we can use to help.” Other helpful resources are, a family doctor, massage therapist, yoga, friends, family, and a firm social background.

Reverend Studd explains that marriage and family therapists work collaboratively with other professionals. “The road to wellness involves a partnership between the medical community, the therapy community, and the family and their support systems. All of these have to work together.”



Reverend Studd and Hilary admit that it can be slow work, but their clients generally notice that they're happier and coping better with every day problems. They've learned new skills, gained an improved outlook on life, better interaction with others, and an overall sense of self.

“The key thing,” Hilary adds, “is to remember to be patient with yourself and to trust the process. Therapy will not change your personality. However, it does help in enhancing and bringing out the best in who you can be. The therapist is there to support, guide and shine the light in a different direction so you can see things from another perspective.”

Whether you are dealing with personal problems, mental health issues, or relationship problems, the Trinity Down Counselling Centre has two locations and a flexible schedule to help you write a happier and healthier story.