

The Best of Both Worlds: Sheppard's Life Centre offers a true wellness opportunity.

By: Rosa Lee
OVHealth.ca Writer

Think you can't get the best of both worlds? Think again! Sheppard's Life Centre offers everything from counselling for individuals, adolescents, and couples to naturopathic treatments and courses in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

De-Ann Sheppard, Nurse Practitioner and founder of the Centre, says that she opened the wellness facility because of her experience working with the military. "I really felt that there needed to be a space for people to come where they get the best of both worlds; a truly integrated model where they get the best of western medicine along with that expanded consciousness of complementary therapy."

The amazing group at the Sheppard's Life Centre includes Dr. Michael Gibson, a family doctor with an alternative approach who De-Ann says "comes from a place of wanting to empower people." Dr. Gibson believes that people have a lot more power and ability to control their health than they think and that wellness doesn't come just from medication.

Social Worker Julie Edwards, specializes in adolescence mental health and enjoys working with youth. She does one-on-one counselling and has her Masters in outdoor therapy, which she incorporates by facilitating wilderness getaways to helping clients find a healing place.

Dr. Ann Lawrence is a naturopathic physician from Ottawa. Naturopathic medicine uses natural remedies such as herbs and foods, and emphasizes a holistic approach to patient care. Dr. Lawrence comes to

Sheppard's Life Centre in Pembroke twice a month.

De-Ann has studied with Martha Beck (Oprah's life coach), and sees clients one-on-one, counsels couples, and co-ordinates groups and courses.

The Authentic You is one of the regular groups that De-Ann facilitates with Julie Edwards. The program was developed to help people build self-esteem over a six-week period. Her other regular program is Keeping Connected, a series of light-hearted evening sessions designed to help busy couples stay connected. This program is facilitated with Dr. Gibson.

Sheppard's Life Centre also offers regular courses to help clients change their lives in a positive direction. In 2008, De-Ann hosted a weekend course that proved to be very popular. Change Your Thoughts Change Your Life is a three-day event that teaches individuals how to transform fearful and painful thoughts into more compassionate and loving thoughts.

And, that's not all this Centre is up to!

Three times a year, Sheppard's Life Centre offers a seven-day certification course in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). "This body of knowledge looks at how our conscious and unconscious mind works," explains De-Ann. "The power of NLP is really in learning how to harness your unconscious mind."

"How do we change things that we're not consciously aware we are doing?" De-Ann asks. NLP looks at how the attitudes and values we carry, as well as the way we talk to others and ourselves imprint on our own neurology.

Communication is also an integral component of NLP both for inner communication with oneself, and external communication with others. "We all communicate differently and have different strategies on how we make decisions," says De-Ann. "Using

this body of knowledge can help you see how others learn and react.” She illustrates this by pointing out how a teacher who is trained in NLP could gain a better understanding of how students learn and then be better able to teach them in a way they will most likely understand. NLP is also a sales training tool to help meet and understand a person's objections or resistance in making buying decisions. “Just building rapport with a customer is crucial to sale success,” says De-Ann. “Learning how to make a customer comfortable and relaxed can be very beneficial in gaining their time to promote your product.”

Because NLP is a powerful tool for understanding people, what if it is applied as a manipulation device? “If NLP is applied without integrity, it doesn't have any lasting effect,” De-Ann explains. “This is the same in any profession, such as counselling. A counsellor who doesn't use it with integrity will not see lasting and positive benefits.”

Having pursued NLP to the highest levels (De-Ann is an NLP Master Practitioner and Trainer), she is an extremely effective counsellor and coach. Using the training of NLP, De-Ann is able to help clients see their own repetitive thoughts patterns, and how they are disrupting their lives. Then, she can help lead the change to these patterns, resulting in the client making improvement and gaining control over their life. She helps clients learn what makes them feel good and more like their authentic self.

The primary benefit De-Ann sees in her clients is a major reduction in anxiety. The biggest fear clients have is what is going to happen in the future. Using NLP to become more aware, that fear is removed and her clients go away from sessions with an increased awareness of themselves.

“I've never had anyone tell me that it wasn't worth it or that they didn't have any benefit from it,” De-Ann says. “This is a powerful tool. Use it to your advantage.”