



Milner and Pailing Psychology

A pathway to healing

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Things you Need to Know

Welcome to Milner and Pailing Psychology, we hope that coming to our office is the first step to living better, whatever your circumstance. This document contains important information about our philosophy of care, Standards of Practice for Psychologists, Social Workers, and Psychotherapists and the policies of our office. Our office provides treatment and assessment services across the lifespan. Please read this handout carefully and make notes on any questions you might have and what services may be right for you so that you can discuss them with the office staff, your psychologist, social worker or psychotherapist.

Psychological, Social Work and Psychotherapy Services

The psychologists, social workers, and psychotherapists in our office work in the areas of clinical neuropsychology and/or rehabilitation. This usually means that people who come to our office are struggling to adapt and recover from injuries or traumatic events. Most commonly injuries occur in motor vehicle crashes, workplace accidents, falls, assaults, or while playing sports / participating in recreational activities. Following such injuries people can struggle with pain and/or changes in motor, sensory, emotional, or thinking abilities. Because of these struggles relationship problems, workplace problems, or mental breakdown can occur. Our treatment involves helping people learn and internalize more adaptive ways of coping with limitations, fears, and stressors arising from their injuries. This process can involve learning new skills, challenging one's beliefs, and/or establishing new ways of behaving. We know every person is unique and our services involve assessing your situation and developing an individualized treatment plan that takes into account the things you value most in your life. To be successful, psychotherapy often involves recalling and talking about unpleasant events, facing one's fears, and trying new things, albeit with support and encouragement.

As with any healthcare treatment, psychotherapy involves both risks and benefits. The risks include possibly experiencing uncomfortably strong feelings, such as sadness, frustration, guilt, anger, anxiety, loneliness, and helplessness. Most feel that these risks are outweighed by the benefits of treatment which can include a reduction in feelings of distress, an increased ability to cope with limitations, resolution of specific problems, and/or an improvement in relationships. Because every treatment plan is individualized, what you get out of psychotherapy will also be unique to you.

Psychotherapy takes both time and commitment. Change as a result of psychotherapy comes about by not only talking with the psychologist, social worker, or psychotherapist but also commitment to completing activities and exercises between sessions.

Neuropsychological Assessment

Many people injured express concerns about their ability to think and remember effectively. Neuropsychology is the study of brain behaviour relationships. A neuropsychological assessment

provides people with objective information about their cognitive strengths and weaknesses, as well as feedback as to why their abilities may have changed. For more information about neuropsychological assessment, see the link to “What to Expect During a Neuropsychological Assessment” on our website.

Psychogeriatric Service

Milner and Pailing Psychology has a separate referral stream for older adults seeking psychological treatment and/or assessment services. Age-appropriate assessments are available for individuals living with the effects of traumatic brain injury, stroke, dementia, and other neurodegenerative disorders. Psychotherapy is available for seniors with or without cognitive impairment for a variety of conditions such as anxiety, depression, adjustment issues, cognitive rehabilitation, family support, and improving community integration.

Appointments

Appointments will be scheduled with you. The frequency and duration of appointments will depend on your individual situation. Typically, appointments are 60-90 minutes in duration, but that time includes 10-15 minutes for the psychologist to prepare for your session and complete documentation, as required by our professional standards. Usually, early in treatment appointments are more frequent (i.e., weekly, or bi-weekly), but as treatment progresses there is a longer time between appointments. Of course, if a difficult situation or a change in your life situation occurs, we will make every effort to schedule an appointment as soon as possible. However, we are not a crisis service and if your situation involves danger to yourself or others, then you will be directed to go to the Emergency Room of your local hospital or call 911.

- Crisis Outreach & Support Team (COAST) Niagara: 1-866-550-5205 ext1
- Distress Centre 24 hour Help Line
- St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and Area: 905-688-3711
- Port Colborne, Wainfleet, and Area: 905-734-1212
- Fort Erie and Area: 905-382-0689
- Grimsby, West Lincoln: 905-563-6674
- Niagara Regional Sexual Assault Centre (CARSA): 905-682-4584
- Pathstone Mental Health Services: 1-800-263-4944
- Gillians Place: 905-684-8331
- Niagara Children & Family Services: 905-937-7731
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Billing and Payments

Psychology assessment and psychology/social work/psychotherapy treatment services are not covered by OHIP. Most people who receive treatment services from us have access to insurance to pay for the treatment (i.e., automobile, health, workplace insurance). Our office staff are well-versed in many insurance systems and we will work with you to minimize the financial burden that can arise with accessing treatment following injury. For psychology services we generally charge \$225.00 per hour for assessment and treatment services. For social work services or psychotherapy we charge \$180.00 per hour. It is important that you talk with the psychologist, social worker, or psychotherapist about your individual financial situation. We will work with you to make our services accessible. At the same time, because we also have bills to pay, we reserve the right to apply an interest charge to unpaid accounts after one month.

Cancellation Policy

24 hour notice is required for appointments that need to be cancelled or postponed. This is to allow the time to offer the appointment time to another client who may be on a cancellation list waiting for an appointment. We understand that you may be unable to keep an appointment because of sudden illness or an unexpected personal emergency. If this happens to you, please contact us as soon as possible to explain the problem and we will often waive this fee. If you do not keep an appointment and don't advise us, we may need charge you for the missed appointment. Please keep in mind that most insurance companies will not reimburse for missed appointments, so it is in your best interest to be aware of your appointments.

We understand that after injury, people often have difficulty attending appointments for a variety of reasons. We trust that you are doing your best and will work with you to make attending appointments as easy as possible for you. Our office staff will call or text you the day before to remind you of your appointment. If you miss 3 appointments in a row, without working with us to address your difficulties, then we will suspend treatment, place you back on our waitlist (if that is what you choose), and allow someone on our waitlist the opportunity to receive treatment services.

Between Session Contact

The psychologists, social workers and psychotherapists are not usually immediately available by phone. The phones are answered by our office staff Monday - Friday 9:00am - 3:00pm. If you leave a message with the office staff or on voice mail, we will make every effort to return your call within 24 hours. Again, if it is an emergency, you will need to call your family physician or go to the ER and ask for the psychiatrist or emergency psychiatric nurse.

In the last few years, other forms of communication have become popular (e.g., text, e-mail, Zoom). If you would like to communicate with the office, psychologist, social worker, or psychotherapist by any of these methods, we can usually accommodate your request; however, you should be aware that we cannot ensure your privacy with these forms of communication in the way we can with telephone contact. During one of your first appointments we will ask you to complete a "Between Session Contact" so that we are aware of your communication preferences.

Please note, our office staff and clinicians will not communicate with you via social media (e.g., Facebook or LinkedIn).

Treatment Records, Confidentiality, and Limits of Confidentiality

Both the law and the ethical code of our profession require that we maintain appropriate treatment records and ensure your confidentiality. Here are some things you should know about your treatment records and your confidentiality:

- We are required to maintain a complete record of all assessment, treatment, and other contacts. We are required to keep your record secure for a minimum of 10 years after your last contact.
- You are entitled to a copy of your record, with the exception of material that is copyrighted such as published test materials, at any time. We suggest that if you wish to see or obtain your records, that you do so in collaboration with the clinician, so that you fully understand the documentation. If you have any specific concerns about what is recorded in the clinical record then please discuss this concern with them. Every effort will be made to accommodate your concerns about documentation, keeping in mind that certain types of information are required by law to be in the record.

- The treatment we provide often occurs within the bigger context of other medical or multidisciplinary rehabilitation care you may be receiving, as well as your natural support systems, especially family. We believe in the concept of a “Circle of Care”, meaning your wellness is enhanced by communication between people involved in your care and concerned about your well-being. However, before we can share any information with people in your “Circle of Care”, including family members, we require you to complete a “Consent to Release Information” form. At any point in time, you have the right to withdraw that consent and we will not provide any further information to that person.
- We are a group practice. From time to time your psychologist, social worker, or psychotherapist may want to discuss your situation with another clinician within the office as a way to improve or enhance your care. If such collegial consultations are a concern to you, please talk to your psychologist, social worker or psychotherapist. One advantage of a group practice is that should your psychologist, social worker, or psychotherapist be unavailable for a prolonged period of time, arrangements can be made for continuity of your care within the practice. On certain occasions (e.g., with WSIB treatment), a Psychologist is required to be involved in your care.
- If you are in litigation or your treatment is being paid for by an insurer, you should also be aware of the possibility that your entire clinical record may be requested by an insurer or lawyer. For many individuals, this situation is quite stressful. However, should it occur the psychologist, social worker or psychotherapist will advise you of the situation, and review the treatment record with you so that you are aware of what information is being requested for release. We will also review your options, including possible consequences of failing to release the information being requested. If the request for your records comes in the form of a court-authorized subpoena, we have no choice but to release the information.
- Psychologists, social workers and psychotherapists are required to maintain confidentiality of information shared in sessions and recorded in the treatment record. However, there are specific limits to this assumption of confidentiality as determined by the law. If there is any reason to be concerned about the welfare of a specific child, the law requires us to notify Family and Children Services (FACS). If the psychologist or social worker has reason to believe that you are at imminent risk of self harm or could cause harm to another person, then the psychologist or social worker is permitted to take immediate emergency action, including calling the police or ambulance if needed. If a psychologist, social worker or psychotherapist becomes aware of any type of sexual misconduct in the context of your interactions with any Registered Health Professional then the psychologist, social worker or psychotherapist is required to notify the proper authority. Further, if in the course of our work we become aware of abuse of vulnerable adults living in a residential care facility (e.g., nursing home), we must notify the authorities. Last, we are required to provide information to the police upon request under the Missing Persons Act.
- The privacy of your personal information is protected by the Personal Health Information Protection Act. The manner in which we collect, use, and disclose personal information within our practice is contained in our privacy statement. A copy of this statement will be provided to you. It is also available for review on our website and in the waiting room.

Minors

- If you are the custodial parent or guardian of a child over 14 receiving service, you may not access (without the child’s consent) the personal health information of a child who was deemed competent and who consented to the service on his/her own. In addition, there are restrictions on custodial parents/guardians access to individual therapy notes regarding their children. If this is your situation, your child’s clinician will provide you with further information.