



Michelle Labine

MA, RCT, RP, CCC
Nova Scotia, Canada

Professional Disclosure Statement



People engage in therapy with me for a variety of reasons; introspection and self-awareness; life transitions and identity-related questions; exploration of one's life purpose and meaning; curiosity about exploring change in some aspect of their life; relational and sexual health.

I am trained in various therapeutic modalities* that inform my work in an integrative way based on your needs, your willingness and your goals.

My therapeutic approach is oriented in Narrative and Existential philosophies, which are the lens' I use to guide my practice. I am also a Certified Sex Therapist and will rely on this lens in working with clients who wish to explore this topic.

**Therapeutic modalities are specific interventions that help treat and improve psychological, emotional, relational, sexual, and social well-being.*

Narrative Therapy and What to Expect

Narrative therapy seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling which centres people as the experts in their own lives. It views problems as separate from people and assumes people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives¹.

As a Narrative Therapist I believe our personal experiences become our stories; some stories are problematic (such as traumas) and left unattended, keep us stuck in a pattern of hurt and harm. In our work, we will most likely examine and make meaning from personal experiences, re-visit and process old emotions, and attend to historical traumas, and present- day triggers. Ultimately, we will edit and re-author predominant problem stories, folding them into a preferred life story and wellness.

Existential Therapy and What to Expect

Existential Therapy helps clients learn more about who they are and the world around them by identifying true beliefs, personal values, and what gives meaning to their life.

As an Existential Therapist I believe all people have the capacity for self-awareness; each person has a unique identity that can be known only through relationships with others; that people must continually re-create themselves because life's meaning constantly changes; anxiety is part of the human condition; and responsibility is personal power².



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Sex Therapy and What to Expect

Sex therapy is a form of talk therapy with a focus on sexual health. It can help you reconnect with yourself and your partner(s) sexually and strengthen relationships. It can also help you understand how your sexual health impacts your life more broadly.

What brings people to sex therapy is typically a change in sexual function or desire such as low libido (desire to have sex), arousal difficulty, orgasm difficulty, painful intercourse, difficulty being intimate with someone, infidelity.

These changes may be related to a life-stage transition, the diagnosis and treatment of an illness like cancer, or part of the natural aging process, such as menopause.

If you have had a past traumatic sexual experience, sex therapy is a great way to process it and work toward healing.

My Qualifications

- My background is in psychology, sociology, and social services, I have been working in various capacities as a Mental Health professional for over 20 years.
- I am a Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC), with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA).
- I am a licensed Registered Counselling Therapist (RCT) with the regulatory body Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists.
- I am a licensed Registered Psychotherapist (RP) with the regulatory body College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario.
- I am an AASECT certified Sex Therapist. I am a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.
- I am also Heart Math Certified and an ADHD Certified Clinical Services Provider.

License Numbers	
Registered Counselling Therapist	RCT 21-059
Registered Psychotherapist	RP 14582
Canadian Certified Counsellor	CCC 10002953
ADHD Certified Clinical Services Provider	ADHD-CCSP 466757



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As Your Therapist

As your therapist, I join with you on your journey and together we create a collaborative relational space that is trusting, safe and supportive.

I believe you know what's best for you in your life and I feel privileged to be invited as your guide or facilitator, on this adventure of discovering possibilities.

I will always inform you about what we are doing and why, I will include you in the decision-making process, and I will endeavor to answer any questions you might have.

Your therapy sessions will always be molded to your needs and your goals.

What to Expect

Together we will explore your concerns. I will listen and ask questions so that I may understand you and your situation.

I am hoping we will work together as a team. You have the knowledge and expertise about your own life, and I have knowledge and expertise about the therapeutic process.

I have found clients benefit most from the therapy process when they engage in self-care between sessions. For this reason, I may suggest homework to maximize the effectiveness of therapy. I will invite your feedback to determine what would be the most useful.

We may also correspond between sessions for brief updates. Counselling is most helpful when the client is actively engaged in the therapeutic process both in and out of session time. Signs of effectiveness might include relief from stress and anxiety, improved self-esteem, improved problem-symptoms, improved relationship with self and with others, more energy, improved mood and increased clarity about life and your sense of direction.

Tip: Problems don't like to be talked about. They do best in isolation and secrecy. So, when you come to counselling and start to talk about problems, they may act out! This might show up in the form of feeling sad, angry, anxious, or tired. Please know this is normal and you can manage the push-back from problems by practicing self-care. I will be sure to review your self-care plan with you in the initial stages of our work together as well as throughout. Some clients find, as they experiment with new ways of thinking and behaving, relationships with others are altered or disrupted. For instance, desired changes in your life can bring about other challenging consequences, such as a significant person in your life not adjusting well to your new-found assertiveness. It may take others in your life, a minute to catch up with you, it's okay and it's normal. You are encouraged to share your feelings of fear, concern, or doubt about the counselling process at any time during your sessions.



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Benefits & Risks

BENEFITS:

Counselling can lead to improved mental health by offering a different perspective and a deeper understanding about thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Counselling can also improve relationships by lending insight into interpersonal patterns and how they affect interactions with others. Other benefits include but are not limited to; a deeper understanding of self; healing from trauma; realization of personal power; increased sense of well-being, and a reduction of distressing symptoms.

RISKS:

There can be some risks involved in counselling. As you progress through our counselling sessions there may be emotional ups and downs. Some clients experience uncomfortable feelings or remember troubling or traumatic events. You may go through stages of feeling worse before you feel better, or you may feel that an issue is too difficult to deal with. This is a normal part of the therapeutic process. It is necessary to communicate with me what you are experiencing so you can continue to trust and work through the process in a way that feels safe for you.

Accountability

The Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT) serves as a regulatory body. The college ensures all practicing Registered Counselling Therapists in the province meet and maintain licensing requirements and adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in the Counselling Therapists Act. The Act, licenses and regulates counselling therapists. Under the Act, the titles of Registered Counselling Therapist (RCT), Registered Counselling Therapist Candidate (RCT-C), and Counselling Therapist are protected. This means the designations are reserved for individuals who meet the academic standards, clinical experience, and supervision the Act requires. Please check a therapist's credentials thoroughly before working with them.

Collection & Storage of Information

As a Certified Canadian Counsellor, I am governed by the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) (a federal law). The main point in PIPEDA for Canadian therapists is to ensure electronic records are stored safely and correctly. As a Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act (PIIDPA) which ensures all information is stored safely and correctly on Canadian servers only.



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Communication- Video Sessions, Phone Calls, Emails

I use a secure video conferencing line through OWL and Zoom Communications. For online video session, please ensure you have a good connection. For your privacy and to receive the most benefit from our work together, please ensure you have a quiet, private space where you feel comfortable and will not be interrupted or overheard during our session. There is a possibility that online video sessions may be interrupted, for instance, due to an internet connection. It is important to note you are agreeing to the potential of technical issues. If a technical issue occurs, I will contact you as soon as possible to resume the session at that time or to reschedule the remaining portion of the session. Phone calls are cellular, please be aware I cannot ensure any level of privacy with this mode of communication. Text messages (SMS) may be used to communicate non-confidential information, if approved by you, please be aware I cannot ensure any level of privacy with this mode of communication. I am happy to reschedule appointments via email. Please be aware that email, although normally not ready or intercepted by a 3rd party, is not necessarily confidential and I cannot guarantee confidentiality of documents or communication via email.

Client Rights

- To refuse a particular counselling technique
- To stop counselling at any given time
- To be referred to another counsellor or health professional
- To withdraw consent for the collection, use, or disclosure of your personal information, except when precluded by law, and access or obtain a copy of the information in your counselling records, subject to legal requirements
- To ask questions about my approach, my background and experience or any other topic that will impact your ability or choice to engage in counselling
- To refuse or say no to anything I suggest or any approach I use

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of primary importance in counselling. I am bound by my professional code of ethics that provides specific guidelines about confidential information in counselling. Anything disclosed within our counselling session will not be shared at any time.



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Couples Policy:

If you and your partner decide to have individual sessions as part of your couples therapy, be aware that what you say in those sessions will be considered a part of couples therapy and can and probably will be discussed in our joint sessions. Do not tell me anything you wish kept secret from your partner. I will remind you of this policy before beginning such individual sessions.

Limitations of Confidentiality:

There are some exceptions where I am legally required to contact authorities.

- Suspicion or reported incidence of abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable person
- A disclosure is made by you to seriously harm yourself
- Concern that you may seriously or imminently harm someone else that you identify
- Subpoena by a court of law
- You have given written permission to share confidential information with another person, such as a family member, physician or other health professional

Confidentiality with Adolescents

Confidentiality is extremely important for teens to be open and expressive in therapy. Teens need to know that what they share with me will be respected and will not be openly discussed with their parents without their permission. I will always discuss policies around confidentiality during the first session, typically with both the parents and the teen.

In Nova Scotia, any person under the age of 19 is considered a minor. The competence of minors to provide informed consent to therapy services is not assumed and parental or guardian approval is often needed. However, as children grow more able to understand and choose, they assume legal rights. An individual may be considered a 'mature minor' if it is judged they can understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of their decision to pursue therapy. In these cases, the details of things they discuss may be treated as confidential, though parents or guardians have the right to general information, including how therapy is going and major safety concerns that might arise. Although there is no set age limit for an individual to be considered competent to give consent, the mature minor status is typically considered during adolescence and on a case-by-case basis.



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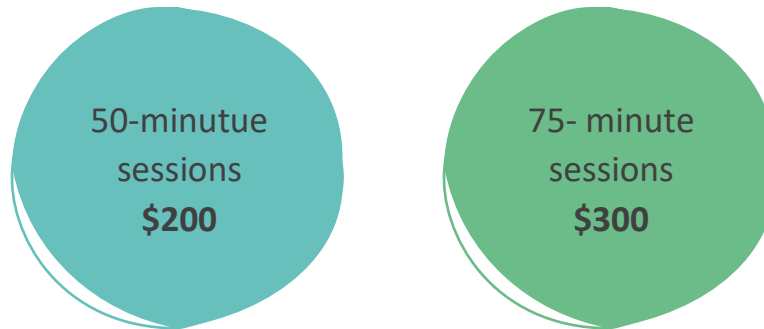
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Ending Counselling

Once you begin regular counselling sessions, you of course have the right to terminate therapy any time you wish. In some circumstances people feel they want to stop therapy when they are about to face something that is uncomfortable, yet potentially very fruitful. Please be mindful of this. Ending our sessions together in a way that plans for closure, summarizes our work together, allows for reflection, and plans for next steps, in my opinion, is a successful close.

Fees

My fees are time-based, meaning these include individual, couples and family sessions.



Payments are due at the end of the counselling session. Our office direct bills to Blue Cross.

E-transfers are due 24 hours prior to your session.

Cancellation Policy

24 business hour notice is required for cancellations. The full hourly rate will be charged for any missed appointments without the full notice and will be paid prior to booking another session.

In closing,

I feel privileged you have chosen me to walk with you on your journey and I look forward to our work together.

Warmly,

Michelle

¹ The Dulwich Centre. (2023, February 7). What is Narrative Therapy? <https://dulwichcentre.com.au/what-is-narrative-therapy/>

² Vontress, C. E. (2012). Existential therapy. In *Contemporary psychotherapies for a diverse world* (pp. 131-164). Routledge.