



General Services

Georgia Strait
WOMENS CLINIC



Why Georgia Strait Women's Clinic?

We are an advanced health facility that gives working women an opportunity to explore their problem drinking or drug use while also building camaraderie with others experiencing similar issues. This shared experience has been shown to provide the most therapeutic value.

Advanced and Specialized Care

Our desire to provide advanced and specialized care continues to grow since opening in 2004. We are a licensed residential mental health and addiction treatment program that has been accredited since 2012 and a certified B Corp since 2018. Our philosophy is based on a non-12-step, meaning-centered methodology that interconnects all our services including medical withdrawal, anger management, addiction and mental health treatment, and trauma/PTSD treatment.



Our Highly Skilled Team

We believe that every client deserves to have a highly skilled, compassionate, and curious team of professionals to help them. Our team provides a wide range of proven health treatments such as EMDR, Hypnotherapy, rTMS, DBT, and Somatic Therapy because while some treatments help many, there is no treatment that works for everyone. Our extensive team of staff and limited peer group size let us offer the services of a large facility with the privacy and attention of a small one.

To see our full team of staff, visit our website.

Our Philosophy: A Non-12-Step Program

Our non-12-step program methodology is unique and lets us be far more than an addiction treatment facility. While other centres focus on abstinence or harm reduction, we focus on helping our clients solve the underlying issues driving addictive behaviour or mental health suffering. This allows all clients to get the full benefit of our program.

Our Theory of Addiction

Our non-12-step program methodology for treating addiction, mental health, trauma and PTSD comes from Dr. Viktor Frankl's proposition that the fundamental motivation in humans is the will to meaning. As humans, we need to make sense of our lives and pursue a personally meaningful existence. When we can't, we suffer real problems. In line with Frankl's theory, we see addiction as a result of an individual's persistently frustrated attempts to live a personally meaningful life.

Principles of Our Therapeutic Approach

Our programs stem from the theory and practice of Meaning-Centered Therapy (MCT), developed by psychologist Dr. Paul T. P. Wong, who used personal meaning as a way to organize different therapies such as existential psychotherapy, CBT, narrative therapy, and positive psychology into a unified therapeutic approach.

Most importantly, our focus on personal meaning requires us to make certain assumptions such as:

- Our Clients are Whole Human Beings
- Our Clients are Growth-Oriented
- Our Clients are the Authors of Their Own Lives
- Our Clients are Not Their Problems

With these assumptions in mind, we have designed a therapeutic program based on key principles of Meaning-Centered Therapy.

For more information on Meaning Therapy, see Our Therapeutic Approach on pg.8 of this brochure.

The Georgia Strait Advantage

We are the only women-only program of its kind in Canada, and this is just one of the features that makes us stand out from the rest. During your stay, you'll also experience the following services exclusive to Georgia Strait:

Medical and psychiatric teams who work closely with each client

An all-professional counselling team with minimum of a graduate degree

Truly personalized recovery programs written for each individual

Comprehensive mental health assessment and treatment

A high-functioning and motivated all-female peer group

Individual accommodation, including private baths and kitchens

Significant 1-1 counselling

Long-term aftercare across Canada

Extensive fitness and recreation programs

Family counselling and education weekend for multiple family members

Our Values

We believe in connection, excellence, dignity, and transparency. These are the principles that inform all levels of care at our clinic.

The connection between our staff and each client is paramount. Our team of staff do not judge, embarrass, or talk down to clients at any point and they would never want to. We believe that the trust required to talk honestly about extremely personal issues cannot be built within unnecessarily restrictive, mean-spirited, and intimidating treatment environments.

We are committed to excellence and have the independently proven, long-term track record of providing residential mental health care. For us, it is of utmost importance to know when scientific research supports new treatments, what other residential mental health programs in North America offer, and what our clients tell us they need from us or what we could do better. We attempt to exceed the already high standards of Accreditation Canada and use those standards to drive our continuous efforts to improve.



Our collective background in generic mental healthcare before addiction treatment has instilled in us a commitment to human rights and the dignity of residential healthcare patients. We've been lucky enough to find clinical leaders who do not tolerate mistreatment of any client at any time and believe that it's malpractice to shame and humiliate patients.

Businesses in the addiction treatment field are particularly secretive about what they are doing in regards to the care and therapeutic treatment of clients and what type of person is actually providing that care. We, however, are committed to transparency in our relationship with our clients. With us, clients will always receive transparency about the different routines inside the facility, the reasons we provide the types of care we do, the evidential proof for our treatments, and the rules clients can expect (and the rationale behind those rules).



Our Buildings



Cliffside Facility

Our Cliffside facility is where we provide 1-on-1 counselling and other daytime treatment services. The 9000 sq ft. facility houses multiple treatment rooms, group and yoga spaces, as well as a lounge and cafeteria area. The sundeck off the lounge looks over the Pacific Ocean, where clients can spot pods of whales and dolphins passing by in the Georgia Strait. The doctor's office and exam room, psychiatrist's office, and nursing station are also located in Cliffside.

Tidemark Women's Residence

Our clients love the freedom of retiring to their own space in our Tidemark Residences after a long day of therapeutic activities at Cliffside. Clients have their own private suite that is fully outfitted with a bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, living area, and brand new furnishings. The Tidemark Residences also has its own onsite fitness centre, TV lounge, and group dining area. For our working clients, these suites come with internet access

and excellent cell service should they need to connect with their employers and provide assistance to their businesses while in treatment. A business centre with printing is also available.

Facility Amenities

Group dining room

TV lounge

Fitness area

Basketball court

Park-like grounds

Laundry facilities

Our Approach



Psychological

Counselling Therapies

Our counselling therapies help clients explore how they see the world and their place in it, with the goal of personal healing and growth. Our clinical staff is trained in numerous therapeutic techniques such as Narrative Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, and Dialectic Behavioural Therapy. Counsellors use techniques that best suit the client.



Physical

Medical & Physical

Our medical and psychiatric services include assessment and diagnosis, withdrawal management (detox), medication management, psychotropic drug therapy, and ongoing monitoring throughout your stay. Medical and psychiatric assessments form the basis of treatment plans and are critical to treating any co-existing mental health issues.

Nutrition & Fitness Support

Our fitness and nutrition team provides consultations for all clients and continues to work with clients throughout their stay to develop their personalized treatment plan.



Social

Recreation Services

Recreational services are an important part of a healthy lifestyle, encouraging not only physical health but also social health. Recreation is also an important part of developing a long-term recovery plan that helps replace the hours spent consuming drugs and alcohol.

Community Connection

Our clients are regularly out in the community with staff, engaging in a number of non-fitness activities such as shopping, attending movies, helping out with vulnerable youth, and enjoying annual events like Canada Day and the local Blackberry Festival.



Spiritual

Spiritual Support

Unlike most treatment facilities, we are careful not to enforce spiritual exploration. While we believe a spiritual life can be incredibly helpful, insisting on it is unhelpful and creates frustration. With us, spiritual activities are strictly voluntary and include discussion groups, 1-1 counselling sessions, and transportation to and from local churches.

Our Therapeutic Approach

Meaning Therapy

Meaning therapy serves as the foundation of our clinical program, not only because it is the therapy most supported by research but also for its focus on the therapeutic relationship. To facilitate the client-therapist relationship, we use addiction counselling methods that include principles of empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard developed by the pioneering psychologist Carl Roger (1902-1987).

Why Meaning Therapy?

Everyone makes sense of themselves, their world, and their place in the world. When our perceptions do not resonate with reality, we suffer unnecessarily. Meaning therapy aims to help clients make sense of their lives in a way that is consistent with their experiences, values, beliefs, and actions. It examines what human beings require to flourish in their lives despite suffering.

Meaning therapy arises from theory and is based on empirical research. As a stand-alone therapy, it has been shown effective in helping many populations, including those suffering from cardiac problems, terminal illness, workplace stress, geriatric issues, depression and anxiety, PTSD, and, of course, addictions.

Research has shown that those suffering from addictions have a weak sense of self and high external motivations and goals. These individuals are also easily bored and depressed. Personal striving and positive coping skills have long since dissipated. They see themselves as different and they lack a sense of control over their lives. Our clients typically refer to this vacuum as a “void” or “emptiness.” Addiction is a response to this life.



Our Meaning Therapy interprets addiction in line with the work of psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who stated that addiction is “not understandable unless we recognize the existential vacuum underlying [it].” To put it another way, addiction is a response to living a life that lacks personal meaning.

Our program helps clients begin the process of finding meaning and purpose. Mainstream therapies for addictions are generally limited to helping clients attain a measure of physical and emotional stability. Meaning therapy, however, allows us to better help clients by moving beyond healing brokenness and toward flourishing in life, despite suffering. Research studies indicate that recovery is about a transformational change. **In other words, stable abstinence is the byproduct of living a meaningful life.**

Principles of Meaning Therapy

THE WHOLE HUMAN BEING IS CENTRE STAGE

Therapy must be client-centered and treat the whole, complex, unique human being.

EACH PERSON IS THE AUTHOR OF HIS OR HER LIFE

Also known as existential responsibility, authorship means clients are responsible for making decisions that will dictate the kind of life they live. Our therapists do not tell a client what to do, think, or feel. They offer no ready-made answers. Rather, they help clients in the struggle to find their own answers.

PEOPLE GROW IF THEY HAVE NO NEED TO DENY OR DISTORT EXPERIENCE

Rogerian principles—unconditional positive regard, advanced accurate empathy, and genuineness—are the foundation for therapy. Confrontation as a counselling style is considered unethical.

PEOPLE ARE RELATIONAL BEINGS

Relatedness is a foundational construct in psychology. How clients interact in the group, regardless of the



content of discussion, is important. Process therapy is a key piece to help clients develop interpersonal relatedness.

THERE ARE LITTLE MEANINGS AND BIG MEANINGS

Therapy focuses on the little meanings. What is the meaning that the client gives to an experience? What values are authentically important to the client? How can the client respond to an event/condition with responsibility and courage?

MEANING IS FORWARD LOOKING

Therapy encourages clients to live in the present but keep an eye on the future. Having a direction in life and pursuing goals demands that clients be future-oriented.

MEANING EMPHASIZES THE POSITIVE GIVENES OF EXISTENCE

All people face the negative givens of life, such as death, grief, and loneliness. Our therapy helps clients develop resilience, face fears, take control of their lives, and turn negatives into sources of personal growth.

MEANING THERAPY IS NOT TECHNIQUE DRIVEN

Our program helps clients see how the ways they make sense of their lives have led to unnecessary suffering. We then help clients develop new ways of living that are consistent with their values.

Components of Meaning Therapy

Research indicates that meaningful living has **four** components:

COGNITIVE - Typically, those suffering from addictions make sense of life in ways that are not responsive to their reality. Therapy helps clients understand who they are, learn to live comfortably with ambiguity, and develop a “growth mindset.”



MOTIVATIONAL – Motivations are most productive when they are based on the client’s authentic values and beliefs. Research is clear that such intrinsic motivations are far more powerful than extrinsic ones. While with us, clients learn to make decisions based on what is authentically important to them.

BEHAVIOURAL – Action is essential to meaningful living. If a client doesn’t take action, therapy is useless. Practicing new skills while in treatment is a key piece of therapy.

AFFECTIVE – Research has also shown that well-being need not necessarily be attached to pleasure and comfort. The construct of eudaimonic happiness suggests that living a meaningful life is more fulfilling than living a pleasurable one.

Formats of Meaning Therapy

GROUP THERAPY – Group is our main therapy format and takes place every morning. Process therapy is a key method of group therapy.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY – One-on-one therapy is generally reserved for issues that clients may not yet feel comfortable enough to share in group, or

motivational/behavioural issues affecting one client. Individual sessions are also used for hypnotherapy, neurofeedback, and EMDR. These sessions take place outside of group therapy.

WORKSHOPS – Workshops cover neurobiological, psychological, and sociocultural topics with a special focus on addiction within a meaning framework.

Results of Meaning Therapy

According to Georgia Strait’s research, which is grounded in client data, meaning therapy has three major influences:

INCREASED SELF-DEFINITION – The most salient aspect of clients pre-treatment is a remarkably weak sense of self. They cannot answer the question, “Who am I?” and, instead, rely on the external world for guidance, entertainment, and reassurance. Post-treatment, our clients are more aware of authentic values, able to reflect on what they are feeling and why, more aware of the meanings they assign to things, and able to make decisions that are more in line with their needs.

INCREASED INTERPERSONAL RELATEDNESS – Pre-treatment, clients generally have disrupted relationships with family, partners, employers, and friends. Post-treatment, they report renewed efforts to rebuild relationships with those important to them.

INCREASED INTERNAL MOTIVATION – Pre-treatment, clients have external motivations and goals. Post-treatment, there is a noticeable shift toward intrinsic motivations and goals.

Clients report they have (1) a “road map” to follow, (2) optimism for the future, and (3) confidence that they could succeed. It is particularly instructive that two thirds of the research participants post-treatment reported that they would not use substances even if there were no negative consequences. They had concluded that addiction had doomed any attempt to live a fulfilling life.

Other Primary Therapies

Psychotherapy works to help clients make sense of their lives in a way that is more consistent with their authentic values. It is important to recognize that any one therapy is considered insufficient to help clients attain transformational change. Each of the therapies listed below is interpreted under the umbrella construct of personal meaning.

Medical and Psychiatric Therapy

See our Medical Services Brochure for more information.

Narrative Therapy

Narratives help clients develop self-understanding and intrinsic motivation. Narrative is particularly useful in addiction treatment because it is (1) one of the few therapies capable of examining the existential vacuum and (2) useful even if a client's cognitive capacities have been compromised by drug use.

Cognitive-behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Working through cravings, restructuring appraisals and attributions, overcoming the abstinence violation effect, developing assertive communication skills, setting boundaries, and other applications of cognitive-behavioural therapy provide clients with defensive coping skills.

Motivational Therapy

Motivational therapy can help clients who appear stuck or question why they would give up substances.

Complementary Therapies

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is an evidence-based trauma therapy that has clients move their eyes back and forth or engage in other

forms of bilateral stimulation such as tapping or using audio tones on alternating sides of the body.

Hypnotherapy

Clients in hypnotherapy undergo an induced hypnotic state as a way to increase motivation, alter behavioural patterns, and develop affect self-regulation techniques.

Somatic Therapy

Somatic Therapy is a body-based talk therapy that helps our clients transform traumatic memories, anxiety, fear, and/or depression into strengths and resources.

rTMS

Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) therapy has demonstrated efficacy for the treatment of major depressive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), schizophrenia with auditory hallucinations, impulsive decision making, and gambling addiction.

For more information, see our "rTMS" Card.

Laser Therapy

Laser Therapy is a safe, non-invasive, FDA-cleared modality used for treating pain and inflammation while also temporarily increasing microcirculation. Laser Therapy allows clients to explore alternative methods of pain management.

Therapeutic Massage

Relaxation and registered massage therapy is the manual manipulation of soft tissues in the body to enhance a person's physical health, treat acute or chronic injuries, and reduce emotional and physical stress.

References available upon request.

Georgia Strait

WOMENS CLINIC

1.866.487.9040 // georgiastraitwomensclinic.ca
8104 Highway 101, Powell River, BC V8A 0S1