

# Counselling in a quiet rural setting proves successful

By KAREN SMITH  
The Champion

Elayne Tanner wasn't sure if a counselling practice would survive being run out of her rural Milton property on Fifth Line.

Actually, she has found the private, relaxing atmosphere that comes with the territory has proven to be an asset.

"I wasn't sure if it could work here. It's such a remote area," the social worker said recently from the quaint office that sits adjacent to her home.

She said clients appreciate being able to come and go without drawing attention to themselves — something that concerns many people who seek counselling in a small town.

The area is also underserved, Ms Tanner said, especially in a time

when it's more commonly accepted that undergoing psychotherapy doesn't mean you're "crazy."

Ms Tanner has provided counselling for troubled people of all ages, including children, out of her home for the last two years.

She and her husband, a land surveyor, moved to Milton from Toronto five years ago. Ms Tanner previously was a social worker for

the Children's Aid Society and Halton Sexual Abuse Program, and was a student counsellor. She currently also works with groups on a regular basis.

Ms Tanner said she has helped hundreds of people deal with problems such as family violence, sexual abuse, substance abuse, marital discord, divorce, attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, relationship problems and anger management.

Through referrals, she has assisted police officers and people with other stressful professions in dealing with their troubles.

Most problems of behaviour stem from childhood, she believes.

The married mother of two teenagers isn't a medical doctor, so she cannot prescribe medication, and her services are not covered under OHIP. She charges \$80 an hour, but sometimes make exceptions for those who cannot afford it to avoid turning people away.

"I like what I do. I believe in what I do. I have a real personal commitment to the people I see."

Ms Tanner said professional social workers are the largest group of practising psychotherapists in North America.

However, clients who seek their help should check their credentials, she warned.

"Ontario is the only province in which the use of the term social worker is not legislated," she said.

"Anyone in Ontario, even if they have no schooling or training, can call themselves a social worker, counsellor or psychotherapist. Many people who refer to themselves by



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Elayne Tanner

these titles are not members of any governing body and therefore, are not accountable to anyone if they act unprofessionally."

Ms Tanner holds a bachelor of arts degree in psychology, bachelor of social work degree, master of social work degree and a graduate diploma in social administration.

She's certified by the College of Certified Social Workers and is a member of the Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers.

Ms Tanner can be reached by calling (905) 854-0801.

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