



## Why A Psychologist?

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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I have seen over 7,000 clients in the past few years. They do not all live in Medicine Hat. In fact, many travel long distances for their appointments.

You might be wondering why people seek the services of a Registered Psychologist rather than just trying to solve problems on their own. Here are a few of the reasons:

1. Education - All Registered Psychologists hold a master's and/or doctoral degree that focusses on a number of areas including the study of cognition, emotion and behaviour. This initial 7 to 11 years of university is supplemented by professional development training during each year of practice after licensing. Additional supervision is also required for those who wish to expand their competencies.
2. Experience - Before a psychologist can be in private practice, s/he must complete a residency or internship (of approximately a year's duration). This is followed by a written examination as well as an oral examination administered by a panel of experts. These requirements form an excellent foundation on which the psychologist can build a solid practice. Your trust will be based on this as well as the number of years that the psychologist has provided quality service to clients.
3. Expertise - Registered Psychologists use a scientific viewpoint and understanding of human behaviour, development, learning theory, neuroscience and personality in their work. They help clients to manage or overcome their problems with evidence-based assessment and treatment techniques.
4. Confidentiality - Clients can share information in a safe environment where their dignity is respected and the things that they say are protected.
5. Objectivity - Because your Registered Psychologist is not your family member, friend or neighbour, you will can benefit from non-biased support and services. Together you can discuss options that you might not otherwise have even considered.
6. Accountability - In Alberta, the practice of psychology is regulated by the Health Professions Act. Registered Psychologists follow Standards of Practice and a Code of Ethics adopted by the College of Alberta Psychologists which is the regulatory body.
7. Accessibility - You do not need a referral to see a Registered Psychologist. All you need to do is decide who you want to see and then call for more information or to book an appointment.
8. Affordability- Services provided privately may be tax deductible, covered by insurance or available through third party billing.

Life can be difficult! You might be experiencing relationship, career or business challenges. Perhaps you are worried about finances or have parenting concerns. You may have experienced abuse or feel trapped by addictions. Many seek the help of a psychologist when they are having physical or mental health issues. Others want to improve communication, learn how to be assertive or handle stress in a healthier manner.

Several of my clients have stated that they believe everyone should have a psychologist who they can turn to when they are facing problems at different times throughout their lives.

It's not a sign of weakness to see a Registered Psychologist. In fact it is a strength to choose someone who will help you to be and do your best!