

## Melissa Di Fonzo

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### CAREER PROFILE

- **Solid Foundation in Evidence-Based Interventions:** Uses CBT, DBT, ACT, EMDR, narrative therapy, solution-focused therapy, gestalt psychotherapy, somatic psychotherapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, psilocybin assisted psychotherapy, and mindfulness-informed therapy to guide clinical private practice throughout work with individuals, families, and groups experiencing a variety of psychological challenges in private practice.
- **Communicator:** Provides ongoing counseling with clients and their families affected by mental health disorders. Co-facilitated group therapy to help clients manage and address food and body symptoms directly, catering to the unique needs of clients experiencing eating disorders. Co-authored "Eating Disorders: Causes, Diagnosis and Treatments" in *Nova Publishers*.
- **Collaborator:** Collaborates and attends supervision with other mental health providers including psychiatrists and psychotherapists from Braxia Institute and CAMH. Collaborated with a variety of health care professionals specializing in eating disorders at Body Brave; collaborated with an interdisciplinary team at CAMH's Eating Disorder and Addictions Clinic and Danielle's Place Eating Disorder and Resource Centre – physicians, psychologists, nurses, and social workers – in providing holistic client care. Participated in daily rounds discussions with allied health members – physicians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, speech language pathologists, spiritual care practitioners, dieticians, and pharmacists – within acute inpatient care, at Toronto Western Hospital.
- **Patient Advocate:** Founder and Coordinator of CAMH's first Addictions Open House and Canada's first Eating Disorder Awareness Walk-a-Thon, raising over \$14,000 for eating disorder facilities across Canada. Served on the CAMH Advisory Board to participate in changing the mental health care model for youth in Ontario. Advocated for housing and financial aid for self-identifying women experiencing homelessness at The Good Shepherd Center (Mary's Place).

### EDUCATION

<b>Gestalt Psychotherapy's One Year Training for Professionals Program</b> Gestalt Institute of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario	2020
<b>Master of Social Work (MSW)</b> Laurier University, Kitchener, Ontario	2017
<b>Honours Bachelor of Social Work (HBSW)</b> Lakehead University, Orillia, Ontario	2015
<b>Honours Bachelor of Science (HBSc.)</b> University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario	2014

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### CLINICAL CERTIFICATES

<b>Gestalt Couples Therapy</b> , Gestalt Institute of Toronto	2024
<b>Psychedelic (Psilocybin) Assisted Psychotherapy</b> , Braxia Institute	2021-2022
<b>Embodied Practice</b> , Gestalt Institute of Toronto	2020 & 2021

<b>Mindfulness Training</b> (with Daniel Siegel)	2018
<b>Brief &amp; Narrative Therapy</b> , Windz Institute	2017
<b>Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) Level 1</b> , Free Your Emotions	2016
<b>Dialectical Behaviour Therapy: Beyond the Basics</b> , UofT	2015
<b>Dialectal Behaviour Therapy Foundations</b> , UofT	2015
<b>Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Fundamentals Program</b> , UofT	2015

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## RELEVANT CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

**Clinical Therapist at Shift Collab** (2018-2023), **Layla** (2020-2023), **Braxia Institute** (2021-2023), **CAMH** (Present): Provides psychotherapy in **private practice** (2017- present) for clients suffering with trauma, emotion regulation, BPD, eating disorders, OCD, addictions, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues

**The Kyla Fox Center** 2019

· Provided psychotherapy for clients suffering with trauma, depression, and body image issues

**Clinical Social Worker at Body Brave** 2017

· Provided psychotherapy in private practice for clients suffering with eating disorders and food/weight preoccupation

· Co-facilitated group therapy

**Professional Social Work Observer at Toronto Western Hospital** 2017

· Served patient/client populations within ambulatory care and outpatient clinical settings presented with complex mental health issues; initiated appropriate application processes to facilitate various rehabilitation placements, complex care, day programs, transitional care and housing.

· Participated in client's psychosocial assessment, treatment recommendations, and discharge planning

**Intern Therapist at KW Counselling Services** 2016 – 2017

· Provided intensive ongoing and brief clinical therapy to individuals (youth and adults), couples, families, and groups experiencing a multitude of mental health problems (concurrent and dual diagnosis); performed psychosocial assessments, evaluations, and treatment recommendations

· Co-facilitated group therapy for the Temper Taming Together program and Strong Mom Safe Kids program, both 8-week courses focused on helping parents and their children develop the skills to identify, express, and manage their emotions more effectively

**Housing Case Manager & Case Manager at Good Shepherd Center** (Mary's Place) 2015 – 2016

· Provided crisis interventions, psychosocial assessments, discharge planning, ongoing, and brief counseling for self-identifying adult homeless women of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds living with chronic psychological issues

· Completed standard risk assessments, safety planning, appropriate housing and financial aid applications; advocated for clients and networked women with independent housing and various community services.

**Intern Therapist at Danielle's Place Eating Disorder and Resource Center** 2014 – 2015

- Provided ongoing individual, couple, family, and group therapy for clients and their families affected by eating disorders and concurrent mental health issues to find the root of eating disorder symptoms; addressed food and body symptoms directly; emphasized strong foundation for recovery and life through action-oriented goals, self care practices, and creating meaning and purpose in one's life outside of the eating disorder.
- Facilitated presentations in elementary and high schools, educating students and faculty on eating disorders, body image and self-esteem

**Co-facilitator at CAMH's Eating Disorders and Addictions Clinic (EDAC)**

2010 – 2012

- Facilitated mindfulness exercises during DBT group therapy and provided individual support sessions for clients living with eating disorders and concurrent mental health issues

## PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH

- **Psilocybin-Assisted Psychotherapy for Treatment Resistant Depression** (*Journal of Med*, 2023)
- **Eating Disorders: Causes, Diagnosis and Treatments**; *Nova Publishers* 2010 Chapter 1 - Eating Disorders: Causes, Diagnosis and Treatments (pp.1-38); Series Health Psychology Research Focus **Authors:** Courbasson C, Shapira L, **Di Fonzo M**, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, University of Toronto, Head, Eating Disorders and Addiction Clinic, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and others
- Manuscript: **Eating Disorders: More than Eating Problems**. 2010. Author of the section "Dangers associated with Eating Disorders". Acknowledgements in manuscript; manuscript sent out to family physicians to educate them on eating disorders

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## SELECTED LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

**Committee Member of CAMH's Advisory Board**

2014 – 2015

- One of twelve members involved in improving access to appropriate supports for children and youth with mental illness and addictions needs, and their families
- Involved co-facilitation of meetings, liaising with Service Collaboratives, and support for meeting planning

**Co-coordinator of the Couchiching Jubilee House's Fashion Fall Frenzy**

2014

- Fundraising event held to advocate and raise funds for homeless women in the Orillia community; event generated record proceeds of \$2,500

**Co-coordinator of Crown Jewels CAMH Fundraiser**

2012 – 2013

- Collaborated with Crown Jewels for their 4<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser
- Fundraised a record \$8,000 for the CAMH Foundations' Child, Youth, and Family Program

**Founder of Canada's First Eating Disorder Walk-a-Thon**

2011

- Provided psychoeducation on eating disorders followed by a 60-minute walk at Coronation Park; drew in media attention; raised over \$14,000 that was distributed to five eating disorder treatment centers across Canada

**Founder and Events Coordinator of CAMH's Eating Disorder Awareness Open House**

2011

- Info-session helped increase awareness of eating disorders for clinicians, sufferers, and general public · Event also included an informational session on the EDAC clinic, which helped generate more clients for the clinic

**Frosh (Orientation Week) Coordinator, University of Toronto**

2008 – 2009

- Managed team of 150 members and \$80,000 budget; achieved record attendance of 700 Frosh students · Through implementation of innovative ideas, achieved 2-fold increase in profits vs. previous year

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## OTHER EXTRACURRICULARS

<b>Improv Classes (Second City)</b>	2019-Present
<b>Reiki Practitioner</b>	2016
· Completed Reiki 1 and Reiki 2	
<b>Volunteer at The Centre for Addictions and Mental (CAMH)</b>	2013-2015
· Interacted with clients suffering from a variety of complex psychiatric illnesses; facilitated activities to improve client's mood and self-esteem, and promote a healthy relationship with their bodies	
<b>Volunteer at Danielle's Place Eating Disorder and Resource Centre</b>	2015
· Facilitated quilting workshops to support healthy and creative expressions of emotions through art therapy; quilt displayed at Burlington's city hall during Canada's ED Awareness Week, and drew in media attention · Founded and coordinated a self-care event that empowered clients and their family members to experience self care activities in efforts to promote better relationships with their bodies	
<b>Student Ambassador, University of Toronto</b>	2013-2014
· Represented the student body during special events including graduation, alumni activities, and workshops.	
<b>Eating Disorder Motivational Speaker</b>	2012
· Educated OISE students and faculty members on eating disorders and the benefit of a holistic approach to recovery; connected students with resources to further their understanding of the illness	
<b>Frosh (Orientation Week) Coordinator, University of Toronto</b>	2008-2009
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