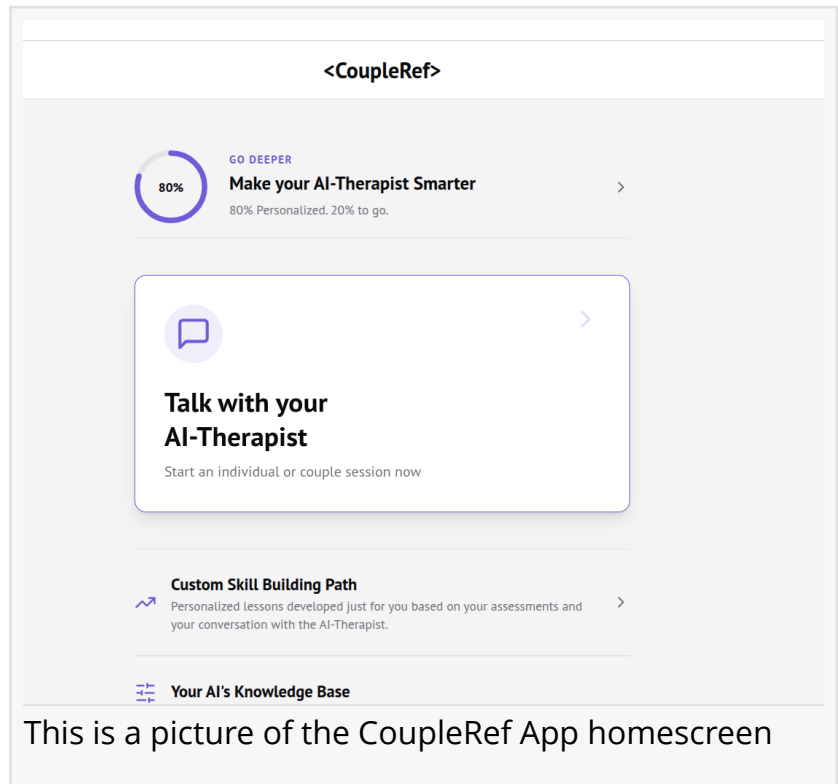


CoupleRef Launches an 'AI Couples Referee' to Help Couples Fix Their Relationships Ahead of Valentine's Day

CoupleRef launches an "AI Couples Referee" for Valentine's Day, providing live 3-way mediation as an affordable, neutral alternative to couples therapy

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA, February 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While much of the recent news about AI focuses on chatbots designed to replace human partners, a new Montreal startup is using the technology to do the opposite. Just ahead of Valentine's Day, [CoupleRef](#) has publicly launched its "AI Couples Referee." This platform provides a structured space for real-world couples to work through the deep conflicts that pull them apart, offering a sophisticated alternative to traditional therapy.



This is a picture of the CoupleRef App homescreen

A core innovation of CoupleRef is its live, 3-way mediation technology, which moves beyond the standard "advice-giving" chatbot model. Unlike one-on-one AI tools, CoupleRef communicates with both partners simultaneously in a shared digital space. Rooted in Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), the system facilitates active repair by tracking the emotional "logic" of a conflict as it unfolds. This allows the technology to act as a neutral referee between partners, ensuring that dialogue remains productive and preventing either person from feeling unheard or attacked during difficult discussions.

The release arrives just before Valentine's Day, a season that often brings buried relationship strain to the surface. CoupleRef offers couples a way to stop pretending "everything is fine" and get to the heart of the issues that are pulling them apart. It provides clinical-grade support for partners who are ready to do the meaningful work of reconnecting.

Solving a Personal Problem
CoupleRef Founder, Daniel Fountenberry, was inspired to solve a problem he was experiencing in his own life after becoming disillusioned with the traditional therapy process.

"I was talking to a friend about my frustrations with couples therapy—specifically how expensive it is and that nagging feeling that the therapist is taking one partner's side," says Fountenberry. "I just wished there was a 'neutral referee' we could use to work through things without the bias or the high cost of traditional couples therapy. I realized AI could be that referee. It's science-based, it doesn't take sides, and it's available 24/7. I built CoupleRef to use in my own marriage, and it worked."

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Five sessions of couples therapy should not cost more than five days at an all-inclusive resort. Every couple should have access to support when they actually need it."

*Daniel Fountenberry, Founder,
CoupleRef*

The Crisis of Accessibility and the "Therapy Desert"
In 2026, relationship health is increasingly out of reach for the average family. Many couples live in a "therapy desert" where waitlists for marriage counselors stretch for months. By the time a couple reaches the top of a list, the damage is often already done.

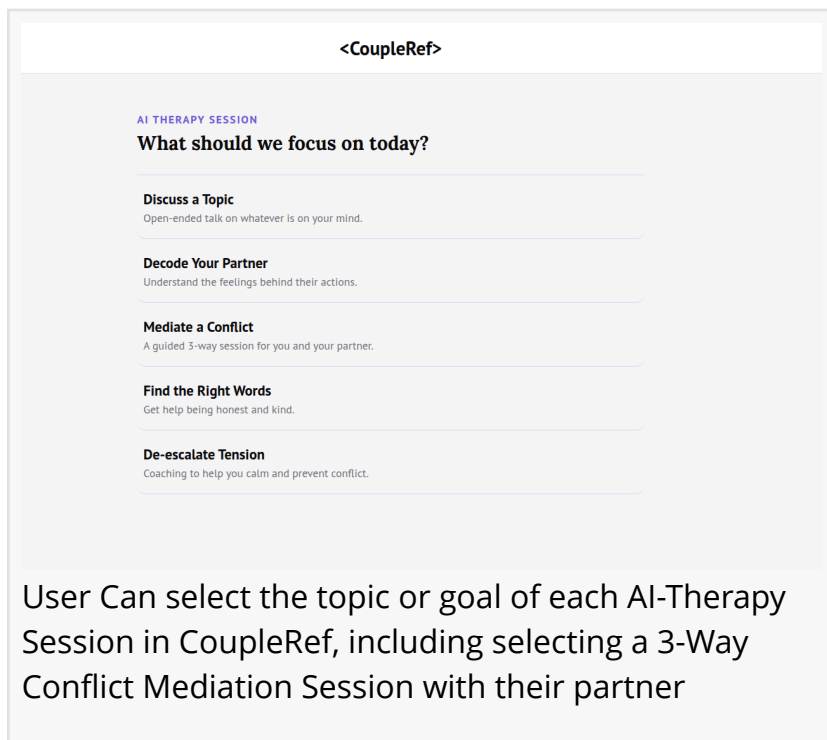
The financial barrier has also turned relationship wellness into a luxury. With private sessions often exceeding \$250 per hour, the cost of saving a marriage has become a source of stress itself.

"Five sessions of couples therapy should not cost more than five days at an all-inclusive resort," says Fountenberry. "Every couple should have access to support when they actually need it. You shouldn't have to choose between saving for your future and saving your marriage."

How the AI Referee Works:

The platform is designed for couples who are ready to sit down and resolve a specific conflict together. The process follows a clinically guided path:

Relationship Mapping: The AI uses validated assessments, like Attachment Style and Personality



models, to understand each partner. This ensures the guidance is tailored to the specific couple's history and personality types.

Instant Insight & Analysis: Before the 3-way session begins, each partner privately describes the conflict. The AI provides an instant analysis of the situation, helping partners understand the "negative cycle" they are stuck in and identifying the vulnerability beneath the surface.

Live 3-Way Mediation: CoupleRef facilitates the live discussion as a neutral third party. Much like a sports referee, it keeps the conversation on track. It interjects to call out "fouls"—like negative behaviors or defensiveness—while actively encouraging partners when they share meaningfully or show vulnerability.

Montreal-Based Innovation

CoupleRef is based in Montreal, a global hub for Artificial Intelligence research. The platform blends Large Language Models with clinically validated assessments to provide personalized guidance. This localized expertise allows CoupleRef to offer a high-tech solution to the very human problem of conflict, making professional-grade mediation available to anyone with a smartphone.

Free for the Month of February

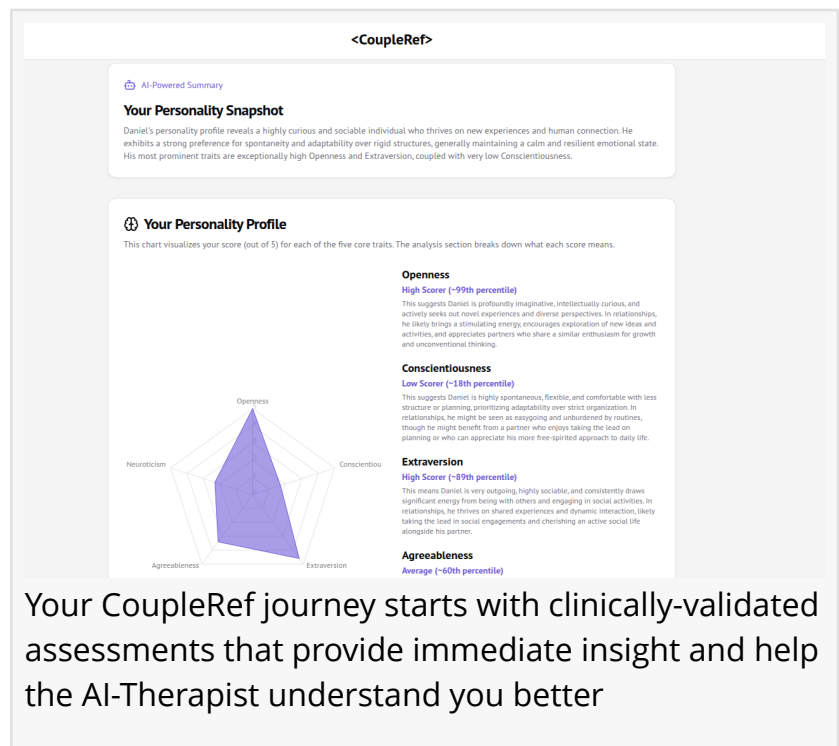
To help couples navigate the Valentine's Day season, CoupleRef is free for everyone throughout the month of February. "Our goal is to remove every barrier to entry," Daniel explains. "Whether it's the cost, the waitlist, or the fear of a biased therapist, we want couples to know there is a better way to get help."

Couples can create an account and start their first mediated discussion today at CoupleRef.com.

[Learn More About Online Couples Therapy](#)

[The Complete 2026 Guide to Online Couples Therapy](#)

[Affordable Couples Therapy](#)



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Note to Editors

Video Demo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mc1J5Hqlapk>

Interview Availability: Founder Daniel Fountenberry is available for interviews to discuss the innovation of 3-way AI mediation and his personal journey in building the "AI Referee."

Media Contact: Daniel Fountenberry, Founder, CoupleRef Email: Daniel@CoupleRef.com

Website: <https://CoupleRef.com>

Daniel Fountenberry

CoupleRef

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

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