

TODAY'S PRIVATE PRACTICE

A Strategy for Getting Referrals From Doctors

A network of strong referral sources can be a great asset to building or sustaining a practice. To make this work for you, identify types of professionals that are often in a position to make a referral for your services. Then, focus on building a relationship with several of these professionals.

Primary care doctors (PCP's) often make referrals for psychotherapy or counseling services. Yet, they are among the most challenging professionals to develop a relationship with, due to their hectic schedules. Let me share with you several strategies we recommend to our clients at Today's Private Practice.

- Collect PCP information at intake from all your clients, and obtain permission to contact the PCP for therapy updates. Send the PCP an introductory letter about treatment of their patient. Provide periodic treatment summaries.
- Call the PCP if therapy issues overlap medical concerns, and invite them to call you.
- Send a letter of introduction with your practice brochure and business card.
- Make it a point to contact the PCP and communicate about their patient when appropriate. Be personable and concise. Remember, this is about building relationships.
- Visit their offices. Introduce yourself to their office staff--often they make the referral.
- Bring lunch for the office staff.
- Invite the doctor to lunch.
- Provide articles of interest to the PCP related to your field, and how it overlaps with theirs.

Be patient. Doctors are busy, and are sometimes not immediately open. But, in time, some will warm up to you and be valuable referral sources.

Take it one step at a time, and stick to it.