

BUSINESS ETHICS FOR SUCCESS OF MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS

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Who am I?

- I'm Amanda and I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Certified Addictions Professional and National Certified Counselor
- I have been developing business and strategic plans for 8 years
- I am the owner of Caring Therapists of Broward
- I have two cats, Pumpkin and Kimo



Poll

- Who has a business plan for their practice?



What We Get Right

- Therapists, counselors and social workers are taught how to develop plans in graduate school
- We develop plans all the time
- We help our clients develop treatment plans
- We know how to implement and execute plans, as well as managing follow-up of goals
- We know how to document our treatment goals

What We Get Wrong

- We didn't learn how to develop business plans in school
- We follow the adage "Those who can't do, teach"
- We forget to develop plans for ourselves and our businesses
- We don't write down our goals and we don't document it and we don't follow up on our progress (I was guilty of this when I started)

First Year Private Practice Fails

- I paid \$650 for an advertisement and I never got one client from it
- I charged way too little
- My marketing was all over the place
- I didn't know how to measure my success
- I used my private practice income for frivolous things

Introduction to Business Planning and Ethics

Business Visualization



What is a business plan?

- A business plan is a plan on what you want to do with your business and how you plan on doing it



Why You Need One?

- Having a business plan can help you
 - Achieve financial goals
 - Secure financing from banks and grants
 - Help you make decisions about where to put your money
 - Help you make decisions about where to put your time
 - Help you decide if your business will be viable
 - Help you select a location, fee structure, marketing materials, etc

Benefits of a Business Plan

- You get to walk the walk of developing a plan and following it
- You can empathize with your clients
- You have the potential to increase revenue and profits
- You will be able to identify ways your business can grow
- You can create the blueprint for a 6-figure private practice

How to Create a Business Plan

- DIY
 - Find a template online and fill it out
- Score
 - Free small business advice
- Private Practice Coach
 - Find a coach who will help you develop one

Create a values based and ethical business



Business Goal

- Develop a wide reaching goal for your business
 - To develop my mental health counseling private practice in Pembroke Pines, Florida, serving adolescents and adults, between the ages of 12 and 40, with depression, anxiety and substance abuse. As a qualified supervisor, I will provide clinical supervision to registered mental health counseling interns seeking licensure in the state of Florida, who have an interest in my specialties, want to open a private practice, want to work in administration or work for an agency who provides counseling to individuals and families. My practice will bring in over \$150,000 a year in revenue.

Background

- Create a background of your business and skills
 - I started a private practice in June 2013 at Life Counseling Center of Broward. My clientele came from word of mouth, from TLC, the office, friends and social media. I began a blog and was active on social media sites. I grossed about \$7000 in my first year, doing it part time. In 2014, I created the LLC and improved upon my business practices. I started marketing to my niche and my clientele rose and in June 2014, I shifted to doing the practice full-time. I see a variety of clients, through a variety of referral sources, including psychologytoday, word of mouth, social media, TLC, the office and insurance panels. I tripled by gross sales December 2013 to December 2014. In 2015, 2016 and 2017, I reached over \$100,000 in revenue.

Vision

- Create a vision for your company
 - The Company's vision is to provide counseling and supervision to clients and registered interns who are looking to transform their lives. My clients will see long-last changes in their lives. My blogposts will go viral and reach a greater population in order to increase awareness around mental health topics. My supervisees will go on to create amazing career paths for themselves, including becoming private practice owners.

Mission

- This is the core of what you do and why you do it
 - To provide healing and empowering services to adults and children suffering with depression, anxiety and substance abuse, while also providing ethical and informative clinical supervision to registered interns seeking licensure.



SWOT Analysis and how to develop one



SWOT Analysis

- Identify the following for your business:
 - Strengths
 - What are you great at?
 - Weaknesses
 - What do you struggle with?
 - Opportunities
 - What opportunities are on the horizon?
 - Threats
 - What are threats to your business?



Strategic Goals

- Create long-term goals for your business
- They can be broad or narrow based on the needs of your business
 - Expand services
 - Increase exposure
 - Increase profitability

Long-term and Short-term goals

- Identify SMART goals for the long-term and short-term
 - Expand Services
 - Start providing group practice by Fall 2018
 - Transition insurance panels to a group practice
 - Train staff on all protocols regarding taking insurance
 - Increase Exposure
 - Reach 10,000 followers on each social media site
 - Utilize interns and post more often on social media
 - Focus on getting 1,000 more followers for one social media outlet before moving on to the next
 - Increase Profitability
 - Increase fees January 2018
 - Draft a letter to clients
 - Update marketing

Financial Planning

- This is where you get to decide what type of lifestyle you want to live
 - How much do you want to save up?
 - How do you plan on saving for retirement?
 - Most therapists don't have a traditional retirement plan
 - What lifestyle choices are a must for you?
 - What are your musts for business?
 - Will you save up for vacations?
 - How many weeks do you want to work?
 - How many clients do you want to see every week?

Financial Planning

- Expenses

- Fixed

- Rent
 - Insurance
 - Taxes
 - Marketing
 - Therapy
 - Pay

- Variable

- Trainings
 - License renewal
 - Occupational license
 - Liability insurance

- Income

- Therapy
 - Supervision
 - Rent
 - Workshops
 - Consulting
 - Affiliate links
 - Products

Marketing Plan

- Identify your ideal client and go where they go
 - Word of mouth
 - Face to Face meetings
 - Social media
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Pinterest
 - Psychology Today
 - Adwords
 - Print
 - Workshops

Summary

- Write yourself the best pep talk you could ever give and go out and live your dreams
 - With proper networking and marketing, Amanda Patterson, LMHC, LLC can reach the goals set forth in this plan. I believe I am equipped to develop the business even further. I am committed to provide the best services to my clients. I am excited about the opportunities that lay ahead and I look forward to achieving the goals.

The Ethics of Being a Successful Counselor

Review of AMHCA Code of Ethics

- For anyone who wants to review the Code of Ethics
 - <http://connections.amhca.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=d4e10fcb-2f3c-c701-aa1d-5d0f53b8bc14>

Ethical considerations

- Getting liability insurance
- HIPAA compliant paperwork
 - Ensuring you have a plan in place in case you die
 - Identify a records custodian
- Ensuring your platforms are HIPAA compliant
 - Phone system
 - EHR
 - Fax
- Registered interns must indicate their status
- Set-up of your office
 - Can you hear through the walls?
- Working in your hometown
 - What to do when you see your clients?

Ethical considerations

- Send follow-up and termination letters to clients who stopped attending counseling
 - How often and when?
- Counselors may provide Pro Bono services
 - Is this even allowed?
- Online counseling
 - In the state you are licensed
 - Using a HIPPA compliant platform

Things you can't do

- Charge your clients for credit card processing fees
- Charge people different amounts
 - Solution: Open Path Collective
- Use testimonials from clients
- Ask clients to review us on Google or Yelp or Facebook
 - Solution: Ask referral sources
- Accept kickbacks for referrals

Marketing Strategies

- We must avoid making false or deceptive public statements, including any related to one's practice, research, or professional credentials (APA 10: 5.01).
- We must maintain the integrity of statements made by others on our behalf (APA 10: 5.02). In so doing, advertisements must be identified as such, and we retain responsibility for those we engage to promote our work.
- We do not compensate those in the media for publicity about our practice in news items (APA 10: 5.02b).
- We must uphold the accuracy of any workshops or non-degree educational programs we offer (APA 10: 5.03).
- When we offer public advice (including broadcast and Internet communications) we must clarify the scientific basis of the advice, and make any professional roles with respect to the advice recipients clear (APA 10: 5.04).
- We do not solicit testimonials from current therapy clients or other persons whose particular circumstances make them vulnerable to undue influence (APA 10: 5.05).
- We do not personally, or through agents, attempt uninvited in-person solicitation of business from actual or potential clients whose particular circumstances make them vulnerable to undue influence (APA 10: 5.06).

What are some other ethical considerations you have encountered?

Social media and the client

- You cannot “friend” clients
- They can follow your business pages
- You must never identify them as a client
- Create a form in your paperwork about your social media policy
- Do not engage with clients on social media sites through messengers, PM's or DM's

Sample Social Media Policy

- Our practice is on several social media platforms. Our therapists will not directly engage you on social media. Our therapists will not friend you on Facebook or any other social media platform where personal information is exchanged. You may decide to follow us on our social media. We will never identify you as a client.

Insurance fraud

- Charging the insurance more than you charge the clients
- Charging in-network clients your out of network fees
- Letting registered interns or people not credentialed see clients
- Waiving premiums and deductibles
- Charging for services not rendered
- Billing a non-covered service as a covered service
- Misrepresenting dates/location of services
- Incorrect diagnosing

Money talks

- Make a note of all payments, including cash payments
- Not taking in too much income outside of therapy
- Bartering for services
- For cash paying practices, offering referrals for clients who can't afford your services
- Advise your clients first before going to collections

Florida laws and regulations

- Chapter 491
- Getting proper business tax receipts
 - City and County
- Register your business as an LLC
 - When does this make sense?
- LLC versus S-Corp

Interactive discussion regarding
business ideas

Hypothetical scenarios

- You get referrals from your child's school and now you see your clients every day
- Your client is supposed to go home for the holidays and you Baker Act them and their family calls you
- You are sexually attracted to your supervisee and you both are interested in each other
- You are on the EAP for a local company and now you schedule two people who know each other back to back

Hypothetical scenarios

- Your clients are fighting in session and you can't protect their confidentiality
- You realize two of your clients are dating and then the relationship goes sour
- You become pregnant and your clients have a lot of questions for you
- You are doing couples counseling and the relationship ends and one of the partner's wants to see you individually

Questions and Answers



How to find me?

- www.amandapattersonlmhc.com
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/amandapattersonlmhc
- Instagram: @amandaplrmhc
- Twitter: @amandaplrmhc
- Email: amanda@amandapattersonlmhc.com

My Private Practice Tribe

- We have a group on Facebook called “My Private Practice Tribe”
- Join us!



Thank you!



Resources

- http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0400-0499/0491/0491.html
- <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan03/10ways.aspx>
- <http://attcnetwork.org/learn/education/documents/iTraining-New.Ethical.Dilemmas.Facing.Counselors.and.Clinical.Supervisors.pdf>
- <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/re/statutes.html>
- <http://www.continuingeducationcourses.net/active/courses/course057.php>