



## **Professional Practice Building - Part 1**

### **Session 1: How to Effectively Market Yourself in 15 Minutes a Day**

#### **Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Susan Fee**

##### **Question from Maria Averza**

Thanks so much. This was awesome! Could we contact you for potential questions in the future? If so, what is your contact?

##### **Answer from Presenter**

Yes! It's easiest to email me at [Susan.Fee@msn.com](mailto:Susan.Fee@msn.com).

---

##### **Question from Jodi Barker**

How have you dealt with not receiving much clientele in slower months?

##### **Answer from Presenter**

I firmly believe in creating multiple streams of income. Other sources for me include writing books, freelance writing, training products (downloadable booklets, webinars, etc. for sale on my website) delivering CEUs locally and nationally (such as PESI trainer) offering business presentation coaching, offering my own workshops and becoming an EAP speaker (usually 1 hour morning or lunch-and-learns). This takes time to develop, but should always be in the works. Not only do you gain income, all of these efforts market you as a counselor.

---

##### **Question from Jennifer Celani**

Since you specialize, but you stated you also get all types of clients, what does your website state regarding who you work with? For example, all ages and issues?

##### **Answer from Presenter**

I make it clear that my approach is solution-focused and CBT. I list what I treat, which will be general. If you're billing insurance, you do need to confirm that you treat the most basic of needs: anxiety and depression. Although I'm currently seeking C-suite executives in a city built on technology, the "everybody" part comes because when people like your style, they refer you to friends who may have a different problem, but it's a good "personality" match. Also, I'm part of a private practice that books incoming requests, which can be general.

My "hook" is that I have a background in business, so I can provide unique insight. Here is the second paragraph of my Psychology Today profile: My business and speaking background make me a good match for business executives, creative types, and anyone wanting to increase emotional intelligence and improve relationships. You can expect an interactive style with a splash of humor. I'm action-oriented and solution-focused, so expect "homework" in between sessions.

---

**Question from Leslie Contos**

What are the Benefits of collaborating with other counselors who work in the same specialized niche?

**Answer from Presenter**

Great! Consider how car dealerships have done this very thing by creating Auto Row. It's consumer focused because if you're shopping for a car, you can go to one general area. Collaborating with like-minded counselors and even inviting support services like a massage therapist, mediator, academic coaching, resume coach, financial advisor, etc. would serve your clients well.

---

**Question from Chrystal Dunkers**

Hi, I am thinking of focusing on career counseling, and my ideal client would be middle aged women looking to transition from blue collar "jobs" to white collar careers. While my ultimate goal is to help women build long successful careers, I am worried about the client's ability to afford services. Any suggestions?

**Answer from Presenter**

Neat focus – good for you. Build out your ideal client profile a bit: What are the specific companies in your community that would hire this candidate? How are they recruiting? What skill set do they see missing? Market your services to the company to pay for a public workshop or coaching that allows the client to receive at no charge. The company benefits by you helping candidates become job-ready. Also, market your services to recruiters. If your coaching helps someone land a job, the recruiter gets paid. Start scouting recruiters on LinkedIn and build that network.

Many large companies interested in promoting women have an internal professional women's group. Contact them and ask to speak/partner with them to target possible job candidates. Volunteer or offer training for organizations like YWCA and Dress for Success to build connections and become known as an expert in this field. You will get other (paying) business in addition to your speciality.

Finally, start creating small, affordable products to educate your ideal client like Tips Booklets. I've sold mine for \$5.00 for years. It's a small profit, but if you do a public workshop and 10 people purchase one, you at least made \$50 for that hour. Also, I've had large organizations purchase the booklets to give away as PR. It serves your ideal client and the firm has a write-off. Win/Win.

---

**Question from Whitney Fricke**

What if you are not yet licensed or in private practice but NNC board certified, is there still away to help people through consulting about your area of specialty?



Answer from Presenter

You do need to be licensed in your state to practice as a mental health counselor. Consulting and coaching are broad terms that are not nearly as defined or regulated. Currently, they are not licensed fields so really anyone can call themselves either one.

Ethically, you can provide those services as long as it's not mental health counseling. The field of coaching is working hard to become more regulated and most businesses now look for certified coaches. You can learn more about this field by visiting The International Coach Federation at <https://coachfederation.org/>.

I'm a certified coach and chose to get my training from The College of Executive Coaching at <https://www.executivecoachcollege.com/>. I've been hired by HR to provide interpersonal communication and presentation skills coaching.

---

Question from Amy Kellison

Hello! I am an LPC in a rural area. My question is: how can I specialize without limiting myself since the population here is small and potential client-base is not as large as what it would be in a large city?

Answer from Presenter

I understand your fear of turning away business. Just because you state that you specialize in one area doesn't mean other business won't come your way.

First, you're going to market yourself as a counselor in your town. What is the competition? How do others market themselves and get referrals? How are you different? Are 10 clinicians going to say, "We treat everything"? Or, can you say, yes I treat these things and ALSO I'm really good at this....What about the doctors – all generalists or any speciality? What's working for them?

If it's a small counseling pool to choose from, you're going to get business regardless. People aren't willing to drive too far out of their way – some will just pick the closest choice.

Here's my experience for choosing to be known for a specific topic – it helps people remember you. The calls and inquiries still come and people ask, "Do you treat X too?" When the need for a counselor comes up – your name will have top-of-mind-awareness because the message was different.

---

Question from Sam Johnson

Hmmm So all of this information is great if you live in a large city. I live in a very rural area. I dont have huge companies and toasmasters to attend.... Any thoughts to market in rural areas would be helpful THANKS!!!!



#### Answer from Presenter

Where do residents get their information? Where do other businesses advertise? Where do people gather? Where are people employed? Whether it's a library, school, church, police station, or farm auction – these are places to offer a free program.

Consider the trades of your community. Get the book, *Writer's Market* and look up trade magazines. See if you can become well known in the trade of your town by writing for their magazine or online website. Offer to write short articles for the local company employee newsletters. Offer the same for the city or town's official website.

If there's a local paper (printed or online) offer to write a weekly mental health advice column. Offer the same on the local radio stations. Make sure you list your website. Start a monthly opt-in online newsletter through Mail Chimp or Constant Contact.

Depending on the insurance you accept and the laws of your state, you might market yourself as offering HIPPA compliant online counseling – perhaps a real benefit to residents who cannot travel to see you in person.

---

#### Question from Mary Reitano

I live in a small resort/retirement community with small towns within 30-60 minutes from us. Any specific suggestions about that kind of market?

#### Answer from Presenter

People still have struggles, no matter where they live. It seems you have two populations – retired residents and visitors. So, there are two routes.

For the retired residents, there are many topics: empty nest, redefining your purpose, healthy aging, managing finances, raising grandkids, taking in your adult children, family dynamics, life stage transition, illness, grief, loneliness, etc. Anyone of these topics could be great for a public presentation. I've spoken at many retirement communities, home association meetings, clubs, etc. Talk to the marketing director of complexes targeting new residents. They pay you to give a talk like, "Brain Health as You Age," to get people in the door and tour. It's a marketing draw for them and you, so win/win. You can also start and facilitate a book club based on one of these topics.

Think of the other services locals need and network with them – doctors in particular, podiatrists, optometrist, hair stylists, real estate, funeral home directors, financial planners, etc. All of these businesses would be part of the Chamber of Commerce that you could consider joining – or at least offer to be a luncheon speaker.

Regarding visitors, you can market yourself as the "crisis" person for family conflict. What vacationing family doesn't have drama of some sort? I've spoken on three cruises and I can't tell you how many people approached me for counseling while on the vacation cruise! When locals have their family visit, will you offer 2-3 sessions just to help people until they can return to their regular therapist?



Finally, network with the therapists 30-60 minutes out and say you're available to offer services if folks are visiting short-term in a crisis. Or, if people are retiring to your community, you can be a referral. You in turn, will refer to them for those who may be moving or relocating.

---

**Question from Shirley Lee**

How do I overcome the roadblock of " Oh, you are not licensed" , although I am a NCC and NCSC?

**Answer from Presenter**

What's the benefit of hiring you over someone who is licensed? What distinguishes you?

Potential clients only ask questions based on what they know, and most don't know or understand all the letters that follow our name, but most understand the term "licensed." Take every question as an opportunity to educate the consumer versus seeing it as a block.

---

**Question from Patricia McConnell-Stephen**

Do you feel like you need to back up all of your tips and information with research sources? I hesitate to say I'm an expert because I can't source my comments.

**Answer from Presenter**

Good point! Remember, "Show not tell." Show people you know what you're talking about by using real life examples. Show how research is applied in real life. Others label you an expert based on their impressions; you're not calling yourself one. Few lay people ever ask about research (just like counseling clients generally don't; they just want help). If asked, provide it, but otherwise stick to relatable, practical tips.

Take this webinar as an example – not one person asked me about my marketing credentials or research. People just want to hear specific examples of what works.

---

**Question from Melena Saddler**

How can I go about marketing to survivors of trauma with confidentiality stipulation?

**Answer from Presenter**

I would become known in the local community as a trauma expert and let them find you. Follow the news and offer insight from the mental health perspective. Write letters to editors and reporters commenting on their stories. Every day, there are stories in the news that could relate to trauma – be the go to person reporters can call. Depending on the type of trauma you want to specialize in, provide free informative talks at schools or even business luncheons on the importance of being trauma-informed. I once presented on this topic to business supervisors and HR professionals to expand their knowledge after natural disasters.

---



**Question from Charles Schwartz**

What state were you a school counselor in? Were you able to steer clear of being the testing coordinator for state standardized testing? I worked in one district that prioritized our direct counseling services and that made a huge difference. I also like the Psychology Today therapist directory, get many referrals from that.

**Answer from Presenter**

I worked at a private college in Ohio, but as an independently licensed counselor in the Health and Counseling Center. In private practice, I networked with school counselors, but never worked in the school system. I can understand your struggle – and that’s exactly what helped me build my private practice targeting teen girls, because the school counselors didn’t have the time to provide services.

---

**Question from Noelle St. Germain-Sehr**

What are good techniques for marketing as a clinician who works with MH professionals and counselors in training?

**Answer from Presenter**

I would get very involved in my state and local counseling association chapters, building relationships and gaining respect for my service. Part of that work would be at the graduate/counselor-in-training level to become well known in that circle (current and future clients).

At the same time, I’d build a page on my website dedicated to being a counselor for MH professionals. The copy would have to show very insider knowledge like, “You help everybody else – who helps you?” Change your email signature to suggest this specialty with a link back to this page. Every time you email other clinicians, you are marketing. People who are interested will research more.

Finally, develop and deliver a CEU on burnout/self-care/compassion fatigue/supervision to cement your reputation as the expert in the field of helping other MH professionals.

---

**Question from Nisha Talwar**

Can I have people marketing and paying them for giving me referrals? They may be the liason and helping me to get some more clients.

**Answer from Presenter**

You could – it just makes me uncomfortable. The financial advisory profession is currently being scrutinized about whether or not their investments are based on what’s best for the client or the advisor’s commission. I wouldn’t want to be associated with anything close to that. I’d rather network with professionals with whom I could cross-refer and build a mutually beneficial business relationship without a financial exchange. I’d also want to be recommended because I truly am reputable and a good fit – not on commission.

---



**Question from Marlene Travis**

I'm still in grad school and will do internship/practicum soon. Realistically, how long before I might know who my ideal client is? I don't have experience yet.

**Answer from Presenter**

You'll definitely be closer to that answer after your practicum! If you don't know your ideal client then, you'll at least identify populations you don't prefer. Sometimes you find that person in the future, but I'd venture to say your ideal client has something to do with your past – the reason you wanted to be a counselor in the first place. Most of us are in the helping profession because of our own narrative. A man MUCH wiser than me, Dr. Mark Savickas of Kent State University said, "You'll find your purpose when you actively seek to master the thing you've passively suffered." I have found this to be very true.

---

**Question from Allen Vosburg**

Which in your opinion is the most beneficial terminology for marketing such as client, consumer and etc. in which to have a person look positively to you the counselor?

**Answer from Presenter**

When marketing to your ideal client, be very relatable just as you are in person. Talk right to that person. For example, "You don't have to suffer in silence." If you're giving a public presentation, use the term "client" since that's what we say in counseling. We're always educating the public about our profession.

---

**Question from Andrea Westkamp**

How can I become a CEU provider and market this?

**Answer from Presenter**

Check with your local licensing board or local state counseling association. Start to learn the craft by offering your topics to providers who are already presenting CEUs. Email and ask if they're interested in adding more speakers. Hone your topic and presentation skills. Pay attention to the advertising you already receive and notice what works or doesn't. Eventually, you can purchase a contact list from your counseling association for email blasts or mailers.

In addition, there's a huge online CEU business. If you're willing to write home studies, all of them are seeking content. Making income this way will depend on how many you write – it really is a numbers game. I've written and published many programs over the years– 15 minutes a day.

I've been a CEU presenter too for many organizations locally and nationally. But, I've never chosen to be the provider simply because I don't like paperwork.

---

**Question from Andrea Westkamp**

What do you think about putting fliers and business cards at supermarkets in my area? Is it effective?



Answer from Presenter

I say no and here's why: would you as a consumer ever choose a doctor or dentist this way? Personally, I wouldn't. Go back to your ideal client – where would that person get specific information? Now, if you want to market a free talk you're giving at the library by placing it on a bulletin board, that's different. It's specific. I don't think you'll generate a ton of return on it, but it can't hurt.

---

Enjoy our webinars? Please [support](#) our efforts. Donate [here](#).

---