

PocketSuite 



How to Become a Therapist Volume 1

A guide for aspiring professionals

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CEO & CO-FOUNDER OF POCKETSUITE

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Hi! I'm Chinwe.

Almost 10 years ago, I was a newlywed and had just made the move from Chicago to San Francisco - for love. I was traveling 4 days a week and working around the clock. I had a professional (Pro) supporting me in literally every part of my life. A cleaner and a handyman for my apartment in San Francisco. A dog trainer for my new rescue puppy, Bih. A personal trainer. A hair stylist and esthetician in both cities. A personal assistant who doubled as a professional organizer and was a miracle worker. An interior designer and a real estate photographer who were helping me sell my condo on the lake in Chicago. And, of course, a counselor advising me as we began a pretty challenging fertility process.

I would text them and they would help me keep it all together. Then sometimes up to 90 days later, I would receive an invoice over email with all of our appointments. I would, of course, pay right when I received the bill, but it was sooo frustrating for me that they had to wait at all to be paid. Here I was a small business consultant who had raised over \$150 million dollars in funding for freelancers, service professionals, and entrepreneurs across the country. I knew firsthand what not getting paid quickly by clients meant for a Pro - unpaid bills, stress, anxiety, fear, and credit card debt.

After complaining about this issue - endlessly - to my poor husband, Yang, he asked me a simple question that rocked my world and inspired me to devote myself to solving this problem. Yang asked, "you have such a great working relationship with them over text, why can't you do everything over text with them? Why can't you book and pay them over text?" That was it, that was when we knew that we had a problem that we wanted to solve.

Yang had worked for ten years as an engineer at NetSuite (a business management software company that sold in 2016 for \$10 Billion to Oracle). So he knew a thing or two about how to build stuff. Together, we decided to build an app for our Pros. We thought, if we could help them get booked and paid over text...they would be paid faster not just by us, but by all of their clients. And we were right! After launching [PocketSuite](#), an app for Pros to run their business. We saw not only our Pros, but hundreds of thousands of other Pros from around the country using it to get booked and paid by their clients over text. Our therapist went from waiting weeks to send an invoice via email to being paid upfront or immediately after completing an appointment.

Fast forward, it's been almost five years since we launched PocketSuite. It started with my Pros and now we have served tens of thousands of Pros, including therapists, in the U.S.. We see full time Therapists on PocketSuite making anywhere from \$70,000 to \$150,000 and part-timers earning \$25,000 to \$50,000. We even have some Therapists with small teams earning high six and seven figures on PocketSuite.

When we ask them how they got to where they are today, they all say the same thing. They say that there was no “roadmap”. They say that they “wish they knew then what they know now.” Every time I have heard their responses, I find myself both inspired by their persistence and frustrated that it isn’t easier for more people to figure out how to work for themselves and make a great living.

So, here I am again, looking to be part of the solution. I am on a mission to create the [largest online library of content](#) for Pros. I want anyone who has ever dreamed of working for themselves to know exactly how to do it. This “How to” guide is just one piece of the puzzle. PocketSuite is working with tens of thousands of Therapists and solo businesses in over 165 different industries to make [online guides, articles, video tutorials, podcasts, and more](#).

Anyone who aspires to become or is already a Therapist will have everything they need to do it from information about how to get trained/certified and licensed; to service & pricing lists; to client marketing strategies; to booking & payment tools; to sample contracts and intake forms; to recommended industry associations and networking groups to join; to tips on how to run their own Therapy business and grow; to how and where to get health insurance & benefits; to access to financing and other resources; to savings and retirement planning.

I am thrilled that you are here now. I so want to reach out and hear your story. You can always reach me by texting PocketSuite at 415-841-2300. I mean it! The only way we get to the point where anyone feels comfortable going out on their own is if everybody, including you, has the information you need and the support of other Pros (like you) when you need it - on demand. I won’t stop until we get to the point where there is a clear roadmap, access to a comprehensive library of online resources, and community mentorship for anyone to have a financially and personally rewarding career working for themselves.

And so it begins...

Introduction and Contents

The field of psychotherapy is diverse, complex and because it involves the mysteries of the human mind, it is essentially infinite. The challenges are as unique as every client seeking therapeutic services.

We're going to take a look at what you need to do to become certified in a variety of psychotherapeutic disciplines as well as the training required to become licensed.

Each chapter outlines the specific certification requirements and costs to train in several different fields of therapy.

In this PocketSuite guide, you'll also discover how much you can earn as a psychotherapist, what's involved in getting started, the best professional organizations to join for advancing your career, where to look for employment and how to draw more clients to your practice. There's even a section on helpful tips when you're just starting out.

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3 Suite Tips for Aspiring Therapists

There are thousands of successful Therapists in the country who use PocketSuite to run their business everyday. Whether they focus on family counseling, hypnotherapy, psychotherapy, addiction support, and many other specialty areas, these therapists are doing what they love & have been making a great living for many years. Translation - They are living the #suitelife.

As you begin your journey, I'm excited to share some reflections from those who have been where you are right now. We spent some time with some of our Top Therapists to hear firsthand what they think matters most when you are getting started as a Therapist. We connected with these amazing mental health professionals in our collective hour of "greatest need". Over the last 3 months, the country (and the world) has been challenged by a life threatening virus (Covid-19) for which we have yet to develop a vaccine; a nationwide mandated quarantine that has left many of us feeling confused and disconnected; as well as a depressed economy with record high unemployment rates and no clear recovery in sight. We had so many questions and so little time to cover it all.

The 3 Suite Tips below are a summary of the insights that they share. They each give an idea of (1) what they were seeing on the front lines; (2) how they are managing through this uncertain time; and (3) which strategies have been most effective in continuing to support their clients. These Suite Tips are just the tip of the iceberg to whet your appetite for what comes next. When this Covid-19 storm passes, these tips will continue to resonate as they are about how successful Therapists walk that line of understanding the problems that we all face in life while giving us the tools to set and live into our intentions for a better tomorrow. This is not a comprehensive list by any means, but rather a collection of hardwon lessons from battle tested Therapy Pros who were once in your shoes and are now working for themselves and making a great living.

3 Suite Tips for Aspiring Therapists

✓ **Embrace the new abnormal** - The old rules no longer apply. New types of clients, formats & channels for delivery, specialty area training, payor types - are all influx. When you stay flexible, clients are served.

✓ **Be visible online** - There are so many secure, HIPAA compliant tools available - now more than ever - to raise awareness about your services, extend your reach, and nurture relationships with clients.

✓ **Establish active local partnerships** - This moment in time has shed an important light on the enduring benefits of therapy. Reach out, be present for community organizations and local businesses in your area - they continue to be a trusted resource and connector for families and individuals in need of counseling and support.



How does PocketSuite work for you?

"PocketSuite follows my story. I worked in an agency with a severely mentally ill population of adults. Then I used to work at Dale Carnegie as a coach. A, "How to influence people", training consultant. I swapped worlds in terms of population. I think it's important to be well rounded and continue learning, so I ventured out into private practice, that's how I met PocketSuite."

Shannon Theobald

Shannon Theobald, MA, LAC

The Kraft Group

www.thekraftgroupinc.org

[@thekraftgroupinc](https://www.instagram.com/thekraftgroupinc)

What are some important career lessons you've learned?

"I think a really good point is about building your life. In my career of coaching, I never forget about life as a whole. Because you spend a lot of time building in time for you and the life that you want to create as a result of your efforts and fruits of your labor, that is really important too."

Quotes to live by?

"I had a professor who said never work harder than your client. And I was really struck by that and I really think it's so true because it's so empowering. If I'm sitting there solving the problems for everybody, that's not really what my role is. My role is to build problem solving skills within other people."

What is important to you?

"So you got me thinking, it's just balancing your life. Walking the talk of, you know, if I'm going to pitch self care to people, I best be doing that myself. Are you living up to that? You know, are you making time? Are you blocking out time on PocketSuite?"

Is education important for an aspiring therapist?

"Accreditation from a university is going to help so much."

Tips for success?

"You have to trust your instincts in this field. If you're in an orchestra, it's not like you have a violin or an instrument that you're playing. You are your business. Your ability to be genuine, your ability to learn and grow and be with the times. You can't do everything for everyone. There's no shame in that. It's okay to say to a client, you know, I've never dealt with this, but let me find out, let's work through this together. The permission to know that is okay is a big building block to being successful in the future because you're never going to know everything."

"Humans are unpredictable, but if you can just center yourself and have confidence in yourself and again, walk that talk, be your brand, that's going to bring you success."

Final thoughts?

"I work a lot in relationships and I really think that when life gives you lemons, which it does to everybody. Make something sweet. Someone wise once told me, we don't get to pick the cards we're dealt, but it's how we play them."



Jiryis (Geries) Shaheen

Jiryis (Geries) Shaheen
Mental Health Service
Therapist, Quality Specialist
[@jiryis_shaheen](https://www.instagram.com/jiryis_shaheen)

Your advice for aspiring therapy professionals?

"Breathe and be flexible, not to be so rigid. You know, just cause you utilize the practice, for many years doesn't mean that has to be your go to practice. You can try out different ways of providing care. You can try out different ways of connecting with your community. The more flexible you are, the less rigid with how you connect and nurture your community. The more of that collaboration, you'll have many referral bases. So if you can be that voice of reason to say, well, here's what I'm providing, here's when, here's how I can, you know, get the services out to you. Then they're going to latch onto that and those referrals are going to, send out in their distribution channels, their emails, and you'll get that stream."

An important thing you learned?

"You have to take it step by step and actually involve yourself with the community."

What is a Memorandum of Understanding?

"A Memorandum of Understanding is just a document that says, Hey, your mission is kind of similar to my mission. We care about the community. Here's what I'm willing to provide if this is what you're willing to provide. And it builds that relationship with the referral channel as well. And those seem to be very, very strong. An example of that, there's an elementary school in our local town and I said, Hey, in our memorandum of understanding, I'm willing to provide your teachers, your families, your students, two slots, two free slots if I can utilize your office space every other Saturday. And so that's a memorandum of understanding and you get that conversation constantly going throughout the year."

Coaching vs Counseling vs Therapy?

"With coaching it's more like life coaching. I've got a future oriented modality of practice. We don't really look at the past too much. We set up goals, we meet and try to work on progress with those goals. And usually you have a certification for coaching or a type of licensure for counseling. That's kind of your first stage. You get out of school, you do some practice. Maybe you're a counselor in training, so you're providing skills in that sense. Again, you're not providing therapy, it's not therapeutic in a sense, but you're practicing your active listening skills, your reflection skills, first stage."

"Then with your therapy, that's when it's a little bit more intense. You got your masters, you've got a specialization, you've put in all those thousands of hours of work and practice and that's where you're going to see a lot of the long term, in depth, sometimes more solution focused work. You're doing everything that you can think of based on what the client needs. You're focusing on trauma, focusing on anger, you're focusing on depression, anxiety, substance abuse, any sort of field that you're able to get yourself further trained in every year."

Therapy in America?

"We have to get to a point where we completely eradicate and de-stigmatize the idea of getting help, talking to someone, talking about very personal things with a professional. We've got to squash that as a nation. So imagine, we're a microcosm of a larger society, a larger nation. So we are constantly tense and we build that stuff inside of us and we can't share it. What does that say about the larger unit that we're part of and how the larger units can operate?"



Dr. Joann Toporowski

Executive Coach, Relationship Coach
[@drtopexecutivecoaching](https://www.drtoptherapy.com)

How did you find your patients?

"I didn't look for my patients. They found me, like attracts like. I work with a lot of successful, driven, high achieving people. I have two degrees. I have a private practice and my coaching business. I'm married, I'm an active weekend warrior. I'm just like my clients and dealing with the same things, trying to manage home life versus work life and seeking that balance and trying to still have energy and the resources to give to others when you are a caretaker yourself and a business owner."

How do people connect with you?

"My private practice patients find me on psychologytoday.com and then my coaching clients online."

Being a coach vs being a therapist?

"It's two different hats. Two different businesses. It's the same population. In my case in therapy, I'm going deeper and further back into childhood and these long lasting deep issues that have come from childhood that are still impacting my patients today. The presenting issue is anxiety and depression and with coaching its solution focus. We're looking forward, we're leveraging your talents, we're translating skills from business to home. It's much different flavors."

How important is self-care?

"You have to be reasonable and realistic and compassionate with yourself. You can't do everything in 24 hours or a week. You know, the answers aren't going to come in a week as to what am I going to do for the rest of my life. That's not going to come very easily. We're not without thoughts. And so being proactive, yet compassionate towards yourself."

What to look for in a good therapist/coach?

"You want to find someone who speaks your language. And the same for the coaching because everyone has their website. You have to get a feel of that person. And if they are speaking your language on the website, then that's a start."

How do you handle expectations?

"I can't find you a fiancée in eight weeks. I'm not a dating coach. I'm not going to bulk up your muscles. I'm not a fitness coach. I'm an executive coach and a psychologist. So I can help you with the mindset and management of feelings and help you to be solution focused."

How to market yourself?

"If you read all of the profiles online, you still need to sit quietly and figure out what are my strengths, you know, how do I work best with others and what do I have to offer? You have to create your own words. You've got to find those there. They're already inside. You just have to pick them."

Final thoughts on your profession?

Therapy is such rewarding work, especially when a patient finally experiences a breakthrough after months and months, or when you hear a patient's kind words during a termination session. At the same time, therapy can be such heavy and draining work. I have found when I take care of myself in the same way that I empower my patients to take care of themselves, then I have the physical and mental energy to weather the ups and downs. When I get enough hours of sleep, when I exercise consistently, when I connect with loved ones and friends, when I practice yoga, when I practice breathing exercises and listen to guided meditations, then I've set myself up for success. And when all of the self-care

measures still don't offset the work stress, then I have a good cry, yell, turn my brain off by watching things that make me laugh, or shower myself with self-compassion. There are going to be good days and bad days. Just as I say to my patients, things/circumstances/our ability to cope vacillates between awesome to awful. When it's awesome, really appreciate the moment. When it's awful, hang on for dear life until it swings back to awesome because we all know that nothing stays all good or all bad all of the time.

Chapter 1. How to Become a Psychotherapist

People drawn to a career in psychotherapy typically care deeply about the wellbeing of others.

Perhaps you have a talent for guiding friends through dark times in their lives. Maybe you have fought victoriously in your own battles and now want to help others.

We all face questions about the meaning of life. Some people are better equipped to handle life than others. Do you know anyone who truly lives a perfect existence? How well do you really know them?

To be a psychotherapist is to guide other people along their journey toward self-awareness to living more authentic and happy lives.



Training to become a psychotherapist will enable you to focus compassion, empathy, care and support into scientific techniques for penetrating the mysteries of the mind to relieve the mental and emotional suffering of your clients. That's a noble calling.

As a psychotherapist, you provide a safe space and the professional skills for helping clients reflect positively on their lives and develop their own skills to empower and heal themselves.

In short, you get to help people evolve into the best version of themselves. With training and certification, you'll also make a good living as a psychotherapist while enjoying all of the personal and professional satisfactions that come from helping people through life's greatest challenges.

We're excited to share the ins and outs of the psychotherapy professional path. Here's what you'll learn in this chapter on becoming a Psychotherapist:

[How Much Can You Make](#)

[Training and Certifications](#)

[Professional Groups to Join](#)

[Career Options for Psychotherapists](#)

[Finding Clients](#)

[Plus Helpful Tips for New Psychotherapists](#)

How Much Can You Make?

Psychotherapists can make an annual salary from the low \$40,000s to over \$100,000. The average [annual salary in the United States is currently \\$56,837](#). The average applies to a mid-career psychotherapist with 5-9 years of experience. Salaried positions involve employment at public and private mental health facilities.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that those with a master's degree [earn \\$12,000 more in average annual salary](#) than individuals with a bachelor's degree.

A psychotherapist working independently in a private practice can make as much money as desired, depending on a steady stream of clients receiving regular counseling and treatment. Working independently does come with some expenses, including leasing office space and insurance.



Training and Certifications

A bachelor's degree, typically in psychology, is required before you can begin training for a career in psychotherapy. You may be able to find employment as a counselor or social worker with a bachelor's degree, but in most cases the education requirement is a master's degree in psychotherapy or a related field. Earning a doctoral degree in psychotherapy is also an exciting option, but not necessary to begin a practice in psychotherapy.

Degree requirements depend on [what type of counseling you wish to practice](#). For example, to become a counselor in substance abuse therapy you would take specialized courses on the psychological and physiological aspects of substance abuse.

Here is a full list of [schools, training, and certification programs for psychotherapists](#).

Psychology Degree Guide.org maintains a searchable website of accredited U.S. colleges and universities where you can study to become a psychotherapist. Keep in mind that by attending a program as an in-state student, your tuition expense will be a fraction of the cost to complete a degree at an out-of-state school. Currently, [the average tuition costs](#) for a master's degree at a public school are as follows:



In-state residents: \$8,640

Non-residents: Just below \$20,000

Fundamentally, psychotherapists during their training and education learn how to help people overcome their problems. These can include behavioral disorders, interpersonal problems with family or co-workers, substance abuse problems with drugs or alcohol and behavioral disorders.

If you have any questions about [psychotherapist licensing requirements](#), this state by state directory is a great resource..

Professional Groups to Join

There are many professional groups that support psychotherapists and their profession. The prominent organizations in the United States are listed alphabetically below with links to their respective websites. You may wish to join more than one, depending on your area of specialization. The average cost of annual membership dues in these organizations is around \$200. All offer continuing education opportunities and the ability to network and exchange ideas with other members.

- [American Association of Christian Counselors](#)
- [American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists](#)

- [American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists](#)
- [American Counseling Association](#)
- [American Medical Association](#)
- [American Mental Health Counselors Association](#)
- [American Music Therapy Association](#)
- [American Psychiatric Association](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [American School Counselors Association](#)
- [American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama](#)
- [Association for Play Therapy](#)
- [Association for Women in Psychology](#)
- [National \(USA\) Association of Social Workers](#)
- [National Association for Addiction Professionals](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists](#)

For more resources, check out this listing of [psychotherapist industry associations](#) and [psychotherapist Facebook groups](#).

Career Options

Healthcare systems employ psychotherapists for departments devoted to mental health. There are also any number of private therapy practices that have available openings. You can also find job openings for psychotherapists at private mental health facilities, public school systems, and state and local government agencies. If you are in the military or have a military

background, psychotherapy opportunities can be found in the branches of the armed forces as well as the Veterans Administration.

Finding Clients

If you're running your own private practice, it's up to you to find clients.

Because of the broad spectrum of counseling services a psychotherapist can offer, focusing on a specialty can help you build your book of business rather than trying to serve everyone. While it might seem counterintuitive to concentrate on a niche, when you identify the specialty that most interests you then you will be able to find the ideal clients for your practice.



Use your memberships in professional organizations to build a social network. Connecting with other professionals enables you to share marketing tips and ideas.

Many professional organizations also offer online directories of their members so potential clients can find a therapist in their area. If directories are available, be sure your practice is listed.

Let other professionals in the community know you're available for referrals. Clergy, doctors, and even other therapists (who may have full caseloads) can be good for referrals.

You'll also need a website with good information about you, your services, and your approach. List your business name, address, city, state and phone number on every page at the top. [Claim your Google My Business listing](#), search engines such as Google will recognize your website as a match for people searching for a therapist in a specific area of the city. Run a search for "psychotherapists" and the name of your city, then check the results. See who's listed at the top, then visit their websites to determine what they're doing. If they're coming up at the top of search results (but not in a paid advertisement), whatever they're doing, it's working.

Website content should focus on what clients can expect to gain from therapy. It's okay to highlight your achievements and education – and you should, because this establishes your credentials – but the website shouldn't be all about you. Fundamentally, anyone shopping for a product or service is seeking an answer to one question: "What's in it for me?" Answering that question successfully puts you in a better position to attract more clients.

If you accept insurance, say so on your website. If you don't, make it clear that clients are responsible for services (or you can go over your fees during an initial consultation).

Finally, your marketing and your website should include a clear call to action, to get your audience to do what you want them to do, which is get in touch with you. Here's one approach to a call to action: "Contact me today. I can help." Make sure to include either an online lead form and/or an [online booking button](#) to ensure you capture prospective client information and make it easy for them to see your availability to book you.

At some point in your private practice, you'll want to decide whether to accept insurance. Some therapists do, others do not. There are tradeoffs with either decision. By accepting insurance, you are likely going to increase the pool of available clients you can service. On the downside, you may have to accept a lower fee for insurance companies to work with you. Plus, there's paperwork. Therapists who do not accept insurance get paid on the spot; there's no waiting for an insurance company to cut a check.



Helpful Tips for New Psychotherapists:

[Psychology Today offers a list of 11 constructive tips](#) that help psychotherapy clients get the most out of each session. Suggestions include making a list of issues to discuss in advance of the appointment. You can adapt this list for your own practice and distribute it to your clients so they'll be ready to get started and be productive right from the beginning of each session.

Chapter 2. How to Become a Hypnotherapist

Hypnotherapy is a popular and clinically proven method of improving physical and mental health. The process is used effectively to treat everything from sleep disorders to anxiety, encouraging weight loss, quitting smoking, alleviating chronic pain and easing irritable bowel syndrome.



Hypnosis works through a process involving suggestions to the patient for relaxation, calmness, and overall well-being. The hypnosis lasts for the duration of a session, but can also be recalled by the patient later under certain conditions. The hypnotherapist guides the patient to contemplate pleasant experiences or offers verbal cues that draws the patient into a trance-like state. From there, behavior modification techniques can be used to bring about positive change in a patient's wellbeing.

Hypnotherapy can also be extremely effective in boosting confidence and self-esteem, and dealing with sexual dysfunction. Clients can experience improved performance and achievement across many disciplines, including business, education and sports.

Fundamentally, hypnotherapy works by increasing the power of suggestion to bring about change. People receiving successful hypnotherapy treatment become more susceptible to new ideas and ways of thinking through hypnotic suggestion. The goal is to implant better ideas in the mind of clients and encourage thinking that moves them closer to their goals. For therapy to work, the client must be actively open to the desired change.

Virtually all other forms of psychotherapy depend on the conscious mind to work on creating positive change. But if the conscious mind gets in the way of positive change, hypnotherapy drills down to the subconscious level where the conscious mind cannot interfere. Hypnotherapy can be especially effective in helping clients overcome what is known as a false belief, which is the notion that the client cannot do something or change something that could lead to a better life. False beliefs often implant in childhood and become so firmly entrenched in a person's mind that a journey into the subconscious is necessary to root out the false belief and replace it with positivity. This is where the hypnotherapist's work can be game changing for clients.

You can enjoy great professional satisfaction as a hypnotherapist because you are helping people work through their traumas, depression, and anxieties. You will guide them to the joys and satisfactions of life that typically elude them.

You can also choose to specialize in a particular niche. Perhaps your goal is to help people with weight issues or to overcome crippling addictions that impact their personal and professional relationships. You will literally lead clients to another state of consciousness where they will learn to break bad habits and overcome long-term conditions that have had a negative impact on their lives, perhaps for years.

It typically requires many sessions over a period of time to bring about lasting behavioral change in a client, which means you are establishing an ongoing client relationship not a "one-and-done" transaction. By explaining up-front that multiple sessions are common, the hypnotherapist can get a commitment from the client to make the effort and do the therapeutic work.

If helping people overcome tendencies that are not serving them sounds like it is up your alley, read on to discover how you can become a hypnotherapist.

Here's what you'll learn in this chapter on becoming a Hypnotherapist:

[How Much Can You Make](#)

[Training and Certifications](#)

[Professional Groups to Join](#)

[Career Options](#)

[Finding Clients](#)

[Helpful Tips for New Hypnotherapists](#)

How Much Can You Make?

The national average is \$85 an hour for hypnotherapists, according to the [American Association of Professional Hypnotherapists](#). Individuals in private practice can make as much money as their time and client base will allow. Private practice fees for an hour of hypnotherapy currently [range from \\$150 to \\$200 an hour](#).

Training and Certifications



A bachelor's degree in psychology or a related field is the basic prerequisite for pursuing training in hypnotherapy. Some states require practitioners to hold a master's degree and pass a state-certified exam as well. Check [the requirements for your state](#) before choosing a program of study. The patchwork of regulations governing hypnotherapy vary widely. Even in states where hypnotherapy is not

regulated, the practice may still fall under other laws for therapists, such as marriage therapy or Substance Abuse therapy. It depends on the services you are offering and the client's condition being treated.

[The National Board for Certified Clinical Hypnotherapists](#) stresses the importance of graduating from an institution recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Once you know your state's requirements you can evaluate different hypnotherapy training programs. Dozens of online and in-person training programs are available, so check accreditation carefully. A national certification in the field is best because it will be recognized wherever you go.

NBCCH therapists include licensed substance abuse therapists and substance abuse counselors, chiropractors, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, psychiatric nurses, physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, physical therapists, school counselors, clinical social workers, and pastoral counselors.

The NBCCH recommends [these clinical hypnosis training programs](#). Most offer basic, intermediate and advanced training programs, although completing a basic course can get you certified so you can begin practice.

For other [hypnotherapy certification and training programs](#), you can find a directory here.

You'll need a terminal degree (MD or Ph.D.) to apply for professional certification with the [American Society of Clinical Hypnosis](#), which is widely considered one of the top professional organizations in the field. [Student memberships](#) are also available and cost \$95 annually

To give you an idea of what a hypnotherapy session is like, [watch this video](#) on using hypnotherapy to relieve the emotional pain of past experiences.

If you have any questions about [hypnotherapist licensing requirements](#), this state by state directory is a great resource..

Professional Groups to Join

The [American Association of Professional Hypnotherapists](#) is the premier organization supporting the profession. The application process includes proof of a minimum of 100 hours of certified training in hypnotherapy. At least 50 of the hours must involve in-person training with an instructor. Membership is \$180 per year.



Benefits of joining include access to business development resources, ongoing education and networking opportunities with other members.

The [American Society of Clinical Hypnosis](#) is another organization to join if you hold a medical or doctoral degree or are [in school pursuing such a degree](#).

These are some other [industry associations that focus on supporting Hypnotherapists](#) as well as [Hypnotherapist communities on Facebook](#).

Career Options

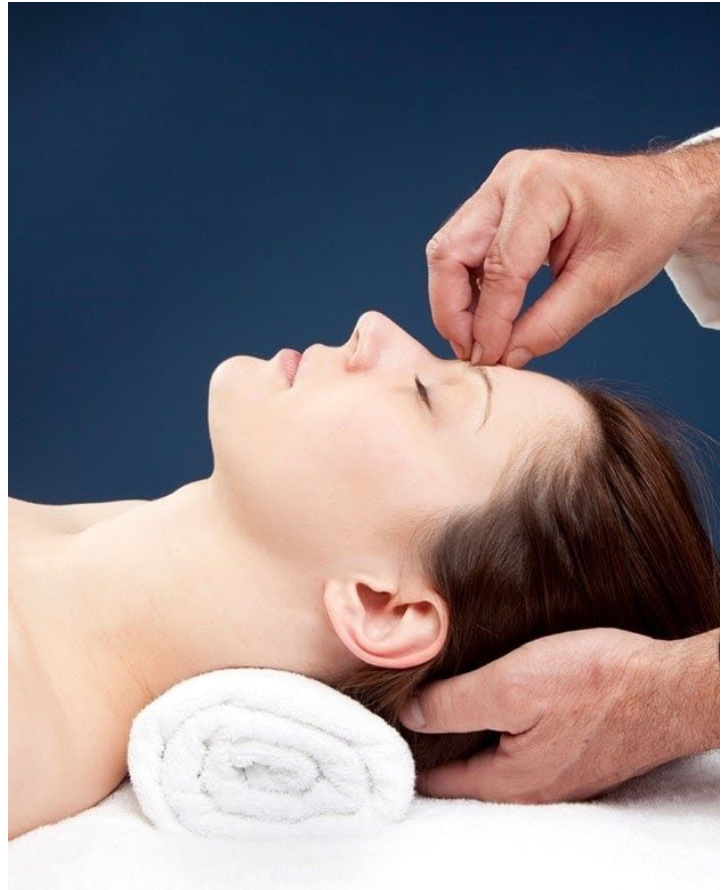
You'll find hypnotherapy jobs at private and public mental health clinics throughout the United States. Use online resources such as LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter and Indeed.com to locate opportunities near you. Public health departments sometimes offer hypnotherapy as part of their suite of services, although the pay tends to be lower than private-sector employment.

You can also use your connections in professional organizations to learn about job openings.

Finding Clients

The [Institute of Interpersonal Hypnotherapy](#) suggests these steps in drawing more clients to your hypnotherapy practice:

- To attract the right person, you need to be the right person. Focus on personal wholeness as a primary form of advertising. People are attracted to the positivity of an individual who's got his or her life together.
- Build and maintain a strong website with quality content primed for search engine optimization (SEO). This is how people will find you.
- Make regular presentations focused on your work. Public lectures, networking groups and "lunch and learns" are all good ways to market yourself in the community.
- Network and connect with other people. Try to introduce two people to hypnotherapy every day.
- Hypnotherapy – Aside from the many other ways to market your practice, if you are not succeeding then we cannot recommend enough "Hypnotherapy for the Hypnotherapist."



The other big question is whether to accept insurance. There are advantages and disadvantages of accepting it versus not accepting it. There is no right or wrong answer. It is just about what works best for you based on what you are most concerned about solving for in your practice. If you would like to make your services available to the broadest possible audience, accepting insurance will deliver that outcome for you. If you would like to minimize the amount of paperwork and administration that you are engaged in and minimize delays in when you receive payment, not accepting insurance will likely be your preferred path.

Helpful Tips for New Hypnotherapists:

Top tips for launching a successful hypnotherapy business, according to internationally renowned hypnotherapist Sheila Granger:

- Focus on a niche as an example sleeplessness, weight loss, or smoking cessation.
- Spend wisely on marketing and advertising, concentrating on places your potential clients will find you.



- Offer to give talks and presentations to groups. Your community probably has many special interest groups, charities, local organizations and informal groups who would be happy to host your talk on the benefits of hypnotherapy.
- Join a local business networking group.
- Make sure all your marketing material – website, logo, business cards, brochures – present the same brand image so you are easily recognized.
- Offer giveaways and discounts to charity raffles and local events.
- Offer current clients a discount for referrals.
- Make healthcare professionals in your community aware of your services. Hypnotherapy is a widely recognized addition to medical treatment.

- Use customer feedback to promote your success stories and create press releases to publicize them.

Chapter 3. How to Become a Substance Abuse Therapist

Nearly 20 million Americans struggle with some form of substance abuse problem, according to the [National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#). About 3 out of 4 of them are battling alcohol Substance Abuse, while about 40 percent are addicted to drugs, legal or otherwise. Lost workplace productivity, crime and healthcare costs related to substance abuse cost the American public more than \$740 billion a year.



Substance Abuse therapists work with people who are trying to recover from substance abuse and harmful behaviors that arise from substance abuse. Many Substance Abuse Therapists work in clinics or private practice, but employment opportunities are also available in public health departments, hospitals and correctional facilities.

Therapy make take place in one-on-one or group sessions. As a Substance Abuse therapist, your initial role will be to identify and determine the severity of the client's problems. From there, you'll develop a treatment plan.

Therapists work with their clients to unearth the root causes that led to the substance abuse. For example, the stress of a bad relationship or difficulties coping with work might lead to alcohol dependence. Use of painkillers following a severe injury might lead to opioid substance abuse.

Substance abuse can take many forms. Drugs and alcohol are the most common. However, gambling is one. Pornography is another. Also, shoplifting has been identified as an addiction in some cases.

By training and becoming certified as a substance abuse therapist, you'll have the skills to help people recover from destructive behaviors that might otherwise ruin their lives.

If this sounds like a personally and professionally rewarding career path, read on to discover how you can become a substance abuse therapist.

Here's what you'll learn in this chapter on becoming a Substance Abuse Therapist:

[How Much Can You Make](#)

[Training and Certifications](#)

[Professional Groups to Join](#)

[Career Options for Substance Abuse Therapists](#)

[Finding Clients](#)

[Helpful Tips for New Substance Abuse Therapists](#)

How Much Can You Make?

The current average annual salary for substance abuse therapists is \$46,259. That works out to about \$24 an hour. Private practitioners with advanced degrees and years of experience can make more than \$100,000 per year.

Training and Certifications



A bachelor's degree in psychology or a related field is the basic prerequisite for pursuing training in substance abuse therapy. Some states also require substance abuse therapists to hold a master's degree and pass a state-certified exam as well. Check [the requirements for your state](#) before choosing a program of study. Here's another resource with great [licensing information for Substance Abuse Therapists](#).

To be clear, there are many online training programs offering certification in substance abuse therapy. Some may not care whether you have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree or any degree. But to become licensed at the state level and get a job in the field, chances are you will need at minimum a four-year college degree and most likely a master's.

What you'll learn:

- How to offer counseling and substance abuse-support treatment to addicted individuals, their support groups, and the community.
- Develop and execute treatment plans customized to each patient's unique situation.

- How to build relationships with support organizations in the community.
- When to refer patients to alternative programs or methods of treatment.
- How to support medical doctors in their patients' substance abuse treatment.

You'll also study the underlying causes of substance abuse, which are mainly genetic and environmental. A person's genetic makeup can make him or her more prone to addictive behaviors, more compulsive and as a result more vulnerable to substance abuse. In terms of environmental factors, you'll learn how an individual's life events – such as trauma, stress and early exposure to substance abuse – can also increase vulnerability to substance abuse.

Your training will also cover the physical and mental side effects of substance abuse so you'll be better prepared to assess a client's condition. Physical side effects include cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Mental side effects may include greater stress, depression and anxiety. Proper diagnosis is vital to effective treatment. These are skills you'll develop in training for substance abuse therapy.



There are a wide range of [certification and training programs for Substance Abuse Therapists](#), [here is a great directory](#) that you can explore.

The [Association for Addiction Professionals](#) offers nationally recognized certifications in certain specialties that can advance your career. Membership is not required to pursue certification, but you get a discount on training if you're a member.

The association offers [5 different certification programs](#):

Addiction Treatment in Military & Veteran Culture

Nearly one in three veterans seeking treatment for a substance use disorder also has post-traumatic stress disorder. Training leading to this certification teaches the diagnostic criteria, evidence-based treatment, and commonly associated problems with co-occurring substance abuse and PTSD.

Clinical Supervision in the Addiction Profession

Effective and quality clinical supervision is known to impact successful patient treatment. Training in this certification prepares you for supervisory roles in substance abuse clinics.

National Certificate in Tobacco Treatment

This certificate shows employers, third-party payers, and clients that you have advanced education in treating tobacco addiction.

Recovery to Practice Certificate

A national certificate program that provides advanced education in recovery-oriented concepts, skills, and practices that help clients stay on the path to wellness.



Conflict Resolution in Recovery

This national certificate program provides therapeutic training focused on how the brain works in conflict, plus strategies to improve recovery in relationships.

Professional Groups to Join

The largest professional organization for substance abuse counselors is the [Association for Addiction Professionals](#), or NAADAC (the organization's former name was National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors).

Students who are taking substance abuse coursework or completing internships can also join.

When you join, you also become a member of a state society, which is good for building a social network. You'll also receive discounted rates on liability insurance.

More Professional Organizations for substance abuse Therapists include:

- [American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry](#)

- [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#)
- [American Society of Addiction Psychology](#)
- [Association for Addiction Professionals \(NAADAC\)](#)
- [International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors](#)
- [National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers](#)

Here's a directory of other relevant [industry associations for Substance Abuse Therapists](#) as well as [targeted Facebook Groups](#).

Most of these organizations offer professional development through continuing education, networking opportunities with other members, access to conferences and other benefits such as insurance discounts and member pricing on training materials.

Career Options



There are dedicated facilities throughout the country for substance abuse treatment. Healthcare systems employ substance abuse therapists in their mental health departments. You can also find job openings for substance abuse therapists at private mental health facilities, public school systems, and state and local government agencies. Offices of the Veterans Administration also employ substance abuse therapists throughout the United States.

Online searches on sites such as ZipRecruiter and Indeed.com will also turn up job leads. Use your connections in professional memberships to learn about job openings that may not be advertised widely.

Finding Clients

Leverage your memberships in professional organizations to network with other practitioners.

If you're a member of a professional organization that offers an online directory for clients to find substance abuse therapists, be sure to add your business to the list.

Contact other professionals in your community to let them know you're available for referrals. Clergy, doctors, and even other therapists are good sources for referrals.

You'll also need a website. List your business name, address, city and state and phone number on every page at the top so search engines will recognize your website as a match for people looking for a substance abuse therapist in your city.

If you accept insurance, mention this on your website. If you don't, you'll need to go over payment policies with clients in advance.

Your website should also include a call to action and an [online booking link](#) to make it easy for prospective clients to see your availability and book you. This encourages your audience to do what you want them to do, which is get in touch. Here's one approach: "Contact me today. I can help."

Helpful Tips for New Substance Abuse Therapists:



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) [maintains an extensive catalog of publications and reference materials](#) on substance abuse issues. Topics include alcohol and substance abuse, suicide prevention, co-occurring disorders, trauma, screening and assessment, planning treatment, professional ethics

and much more. All of the materials are free and available to download or read online.

Chapter 4. How to Become a Behavioral Therapist



Behavioral Therapists help clients who suffer from unhealthy disorders such as anxiety, depression and self-destructive behaviors.

A behavioral therapist may also treat clients with cognitive disabilities such as autism or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The overarching goal is to help clients live better lives by overcoming negative behaviors and habits holding them back.

Training as a behavioral therapist begins by earning a bachelor's degree in psychology or a related field. You can be a behavioral disorder counselor with an undergraduate degree, although to practice as a licensed behavioral therapist you'll need to earn a master's degree in an appropriate field and work towards licensing.

All U.S. states now require a master's degree and between 2,000 and 4,000 hours of supervised clinical experience, depending on the state, to obtain a license as a behavioral therapist.

Once certified, you'll be able to help clients work on changing their behavior as well as their reactions and coping skills when challenges arise. This helps your clients gain self-control and self-reliance. Along the journey, you'll earn their trust while learning their personalities, skills and abilities, which will be key to pursuing an effective plan of treatment. Ultimately, your clients should be able to lead healthy and emotionally stable lives as they work with you over a period of weeks, months and possibly even years.

In addition to your education and training, you'll need patience and a desire to help others to succeed as a behavioral therapist. You'll be helping patients overcome perhaps decades of entrenched behavior so they can begin to rebuild and more fully enjoy their lives.

The demands are high, but so are the personal and professional rewards. If you want to help people move beyond limiting behaviors that are holding them back from becoming their best selves, training as a behavioral therapist could turn out to be one of the most satisfying decisions you make in this life.

Here's what you'll learn in this chapter on becoming a Behavioral Therapist::

[How Much Can You Make](#)

[Training and Certifications](#)

[Professional Groups to Join](#)

[Career Options for Behavioral Therapists](#)

[Finding Clients](#)

[Helpful Tips for New Behavioral Therapists](#)

How Much Can You Make?



The national average salary for a behavioral therapist is currently \$51,000 a year, according to the [Master in Psychology Guide](#). That average tends to be for therapists employed by a public or private facility. Behavioral therapists running their own private practice can make more than \$100,000 a year after a few years of experience.

Training and Certifications

A bachelor's degree in psychology or a related field is the basic prerequisite for pursuing training as a behavioral therapist. All states require practitioners to hold a master's degree and pass a state-certified exam to get licensed as a behavioral therapist. Check [the requirements for your state](#) before choosing a program of study.

Alternatively, it may be less expensive to pursue an online degree. [You can search accredited schools here](#).

The [National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists](#) (NACBT) offers certification in the field. Online training for certification costs \$100 for the application fee and \$100 for the annual recertification fee (there's a \$25 discount on annual renewals for NACBT members).

These are the requirements:

- A master's or doctoral degree in psychology, counseling, social work, psychiatry, occupational therapy, or a related field from an accredited university.
- Ten years of verified post-graduate experience in cognitive-behavioral therapy.
- Three letters of recommendation from mental health professionals who are familiar with your skills.
- Successful completion of a certification program in cognitive-behavioral therapy that is recognized by the NACBT, such as Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, Rational Behavior Therapy, Rational Living Therapy, or Cognitive Therapy.

Certification is good for five years. To recertify, you'll need to submit proof of 25 hours of continuing education.

You'll also be expected to publish at least one article every year that is related to cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Professional Groups to Join



The [National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists](#) is the most respected organization supporting the profession of behavioral therapy. [An annual membership costs \\$75](#), or \$50 for students.

Benefits of joining include your business listing on the association's [find a certified therapist](#) webpage. There's also an abundance of ongoing education opportunities, access to workshops and news. You'll also be able to network with other members, which lets you exchange ideas and learn about job opportunities.

Career Options



There are dedicated facilities throughout the country offering behavioral therapy. Private healthcare systems employ behavioral therapists. Openings can also be found at private mental health clinics, and state and local government health agencies.

Don't overlook online job search sites such as ZipRecruiter and Indeed.com, but bear in mind that anyone can find these listings so

competition is likely to be greater.

Instead, focus more time on your connections through professional memberships to learn about job openings that may not have been advertised.

Finding Clients

Alert professionals in the community that you are available for referrals. Doctors and clergy who are aware of your business and know you personally are much more likely to recommend your services to prospective clients.

Find out if your memberships in professional organizations include a listing in any online directories. Many organizations maintain a searchable web page of members so potential clients can find you.

Your website should include the business name, address, city and state and phone number on every page at the top. This helps search engines recognize your website as a match for people looking for a therapist in a specific city. You should also claim your Google My Business listing

and add an [online booking link](#) to your website and Google My Business so clients can easily see your availability and schedule you.

Your website content should list your services and what clients should expect from therapy. You should highlight your achievements and education, but most of your content should focus on how your services benefit clients.

If you're running a private practice, at some point you'll have to decide whether to accept insurance as payment for counseling services. By accepting insurance plans, you can increase your eligible pool of available clients; however, it will likely take more time for you to be paid. At the same time, your fees may need to be adjusted to meet insurance reimbursement rate guidelines. There's also more paperwork and administration that comes with working with accepting insurance.

Helpful Tips for New Behavioral Therapists:



When you're just starting out as a behavioral therapist it's helpful to have a game plan for interacting with new clients. [Psychology Today](#) offers these 7 tips to make your practice a success:

Discuss treatment goals

Plan for success starting with the initial assessment phase. Patients need goals to stay focused. Without goals, therapy can devolve into “the problem of the week” rather

than getting to the underlying issues.

Begin each session with an agenda

Deciding what to cover at the beginning of the session keeps the time focused and productive. A framework for each session also helps the therapist and the client stay on track. For instance, each session might begin with a review of homework from the last session, a “check-in” to go over anything significant that happened since the last session and cover topics related to the goal of the therapy.

Discuss solutions that are specific to issues

The goal here is to practice the skills that help unblock specific behavioral issues, focusing on one at a time.

Use flashcards

These visual cues help reinforce new coping skills being used in therapy. For example, a patient suffering from depression could be shown flashcards with solutions such as “take a short walk” or “reach out to a friend.”

Stay focused

Keep the session on-topic as much as possible. If a client veers off into an unrelated discussion, gently steer them back to that week’s agenda.

Assign homework

This helps clients maximize the benefits of therapy sessions by continuing their work after they leave your office. Encourage clients to write down their thoughts in a journal or notebook and bring the notes with them to therapy.

Ask for feedback

Be open with your clients. Ask how the session went, what were the key take-aways and what, if anything, could be improved. This open communication builds a stronger relationship with the client, fosters trust and creates a greater sense of teamwork. Asking for feedback shows you care and want to provide the best therapy services possible.

Chapter 5. How to Become a Child Therapist



Childhood should be a happy time. Far too often, though, it isn't. Mental and emotional illness can have a severe impact on a child's development, leading to ingrained issues that could last a lifetime if left untreated. With care, compassion and treatment, a childhood with significant trauma can be transformed into triumph as a child once again enjoys a carefree existence of discovery and learning in a loving environment.

Child therapists specialize in treating children typically under the age of 17 with behavioral, emotional, or mental disorders. These professionals may work in a public school system, a clinical setting, as part of a medical team, government agency, or in private practice.

Therapists typically work with children to help them become mentally and emotionally stable and happy. Some child therapists focus on certain areas, such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, abuse, or depression.

Because very young children cannot always express themselves fully or explain what is going on inside, child therapists often try “play therapy” as a means of drawing out the child. With play therapy, a child engages in an enjoyable activity while the therapist observes. As children engage in the activity they may begin to reveal emotions, express feelings and say what’s on their mind. Child therapists use these insights to assess, diagnose, and develop treatment plans.

To be successful in treating children with mental and emotional disorders, a child therapist must have open communication with the child's caregivers, whether parents or legal guardians. Here, your role is to explain to caregivers what to expect during therapy and recovery as well as offer suggestions on what they should watch for and how they can help. You’ll enjoy tremendous professional satisfaction and an above-average income when you become a child therapist.

When you choose to become a child therapist you are making a commitment to improving young lives, to bringing joy back into children’s spirits, and to restoring peace within families. You are helping people at the most impressionable ages achieve normalcy in their lives. You help children find and hold onto their self-confidence. You help repair the past and fix the present so the child can enjoy the future. Few career paths are more fulfilling and impactful on individual clients and society as a whole.

Here’s what you’ll learn in this chapter on becoming a Child Therapist:

[How Much Can You Make](#)

[Training and Certifications](#)

[Professional Groups to Join](#)

[Career Options for Child Therapists](#)

[Finding Clients](#)

[Helpful Tips for New Child Therapists](#)

How Much Can You Make?



The average annual salary for a child therapist [is currently \\$69,248](#).

Therapists with an established private practice can make much more. An income of more than \$200,000 a year is not uncommon for a child therapist with 7-10 years of experience. Those at the higher end of the pay range tend to have doctoral

degrees in psychiatry, while a therapist can practice in most states with a master's degree.

In terms of actual work, there is little difference between a child therapist and a child psychiatrist, the main distinction being that a psychiatrist can prescribe medication. A therapist cannot.

The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) estimates that about a third of licensed psychologists were in private practice, including child therapists. In these private-practice settings, children receive treatment on an outpatient basis.

Therapists can also work for public or private healthcare facilities, such as a pediatrician's office.

Job opportunities for child therapists are expected to increase 14 percent through 2028, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Training and Certifications

A bachelor's degree in psychology or a related field is the standard prerequisite for pursuing training as a child therapist. All states require practitioners to hold at least the minimum of a master's degree and pass a state-certified exam to get licensed as a child therapist. Check [the requirements for your state](#) before choosing a program of study.

What you'll learn:

- Principles of child psychology
- Therapy techniques when working with children
- Recognizing and diagnosing different learning disabilities
- Diagnosing social disorders

- Evaluating emotional problems
- Developing effective treatment plans
- Communicating with children
- Communicating with caregivers



Professional Groups to Join

Stay informed about new developments in the field and build a network of connections with fellow professionals by joining one or more of these organizations:

[American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry \(AACAP\)](#)

The AACAP promotes the positive and healthy development of people from infancy to adulthood. Access to ongoing education, conferences, liability insurance coverage and a listing on the academy's directory of professionals are just some of the membership benefits.

[American Psychiatric Association \(APA\)](#)

More than 37,000 APA members are devoted to psychiatric research, ethical standards in clinical practice, and providing ongoing education opportunities and other services to members.

[American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#)

Similar to the American Psychiatric Association, this organization of 115,000 members offers professional conferences, reports, discussions and publications.

Your network and access to resources in the field will expand through membership in one of the many professional industry associations. Connecting with other experts in the field is crucial to your own growth and continuing professional education.

Career Options



Child therapists can find jobs within public school systems, private schools, public health clinics and working with a team of therapists in a private practice or offering therapy as an individual private practitioner.

Leverage your membership in professional organizations by networking with other therapists to learn about job opportunities.

Finding Clients

Network with other members of your professional organizations to ask about job openings.

Many professional organizations maintain an online directory for caregivers to find a child therapist. Get your business added to the list.

Contact other professionals in your community to let them know you're available for referrals. Clergy, doctors, and even other therapists are good sources for referrals.

See Chapters 1 through 4 for other channels to find clients.

Helpful Hints for New Child Therapists

According to [Positive Psychology](#), parents and guardians often ask whether a child really needs therapy, whether treatment can do any good and what signs to look for in a child who may be a good candidate for therapy.

These symptoms and behaviors in children may indicate a problem that therapy can help with or correct:

- Unwarranted aggression
- Incontinence

- Difficulty adjusting to social situations
- Frequent nightmare and sleep difficulties
- A sudden drop in grades at school
- Persistent worry and anxiety
- Withdrawing from activities they normally enjoy
- Loss of appetite or dramatic weight loss/gain
- Performing obsessive routines like hand washing
- Expressing thoughts of suicide
- Talking about voices they hear in their head
- Social isolation and wanting to be alone
- Alcohol or drug use
- Increased physical complaints despite a normal, healthy physician's report
- Self-harm such as cutting
- Persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Constant anger and a tendency to overreact
- Preoccupation with physical illness or personal appearance
- An inability to concentrate, think clearly or make decisions
- An inability to sit still
- Diets or bingeing behavior
- Violent acts such as setting fires or killing animals

The [American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry](#) suggests therapists should be prepared to answer these questions from caregivers:

- Why is psychotherapy being recommended?
- What results can I expect?

- How long will my child be involved in therapy?
- How frequently will the therapist see my child?
- Will the therapist be meeting with just my child or with the entire family?
- How much will sessions cost?
- How will we (caregivers) be informed about our child's progress and how can we help?
- How soon can we expect to see some changes?

Chapter 6. How to Become a Clinical Therapist

Clinical therapists help people overcome a range of mental health and emotional issues that can range from anxiety and depression to suicidal thoughts.



Clinical therapists have job descriptions similar to clinical psychologists, although there are key differences. To practice as a clinical therapist, you'll need to earn a master's degree. Clinical psychologists hold a Ph.D. in the field and are trained to treat individuals with chronic mental illness such as schizophrenia. Clinical psychologists are also legally allowed to prescribe medications, whereas a therapist cannot.

One of the most important traits a successful clinical therapist can possess is tolerance for many different lifestyles. You are going to encounter people whose lives may be very different from yours. Mental illness can affect all walks of life.

The challenges of working with people facing severe problems are offset by the tremendous professional satisfaction of helping them get better as they overcome life's challenges and learn coping mechanisms with your guidance. Over time, as you build your practice and gain experience, you can expect to earn an above-average salary. Six figures a year is not uncommon for therapists in private practice.

But first, you'll need to train, become certified and receive your state license to practice. We'll go through the process step by step.

In this article you'll learn:

[How Much Can You Make](#)

[Training and Certifications](#)

[Professional Groups to Join](#)

[Career Options for Clinical Therapists](#)

[Finding Clients](#)

[Helpful Tips for New Clinical Therapists](#)

How Much Can You Make?

The average salary for a self-employed clinical therapist [is currently \\$150,000 per year](#). Those working for public or private health facilities make about \$52,000 per year and may be just starting out in the profession.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there will be a 29 percent growth in demand over the next two years for clinical therapists with a master's degree in counseling. In practical terms, that means employment prospects are solid.

Training and Certifications

In order to get licensed, you need to be sure that the clinic you choose for training is approved by the [American Counseling Association](#). This is the organization states rely upon for setting professional standards that must be met to award a counselor's license to practice. Check the [specific licensing requirements for your state here](#).

Strict licensing rules are in place to protect both yourself and clients from potential harm. Without strong training and licensing requirements, a counselor might begin a practice and be unable to recognize the signs of a patient at high risk for suicide, for example.



Clinical therapy programs teach students about counseling theories and techniques, ethical and legal matters, working with different individuals across all strata of society, and evaluating and diagnosing clients to prepare a proper plan of treatment.

A master's degree will take 1-3 years to complete. A Ph.D. can take from 5-8 years to finish. Many doctoral candidates work full-time while pursuing their studies, which is why it may take longer to earn a Ph.D.

[The National Board for Certified Counselors](#) is the main accrediting body for certifying clinical therapists.

Requirements include a master's degree with coursework in these areas:

- Human Growth and Development Theories in Counseling
- Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling
- Helping Relationships in Counseling
- Group Counseling Theories and Processes
- Career Counseling and Lifestyle Development
- Assessment in Counseling
- Research and Program Evaluation
- Professional Orientation to Counseling
- Counseling Field Experience



Additional requirements include 3,000 hours of work experience within a 24-month period and passing an examination administered by the NBCC. You can review [the exam content outline here](#). There's a \$375 fee that covers board registration and the exam.

Professional Groups to Join

[The National Board for Certified Counselors](#) is the group to join as a certified clinical therapist. The annual fee is \$250.

Benefits of maintaining your certification are abundant:

- Use of the board's logo and credential mark on your marketing materials
- Discounts on liability insurance.
- Publications, including a peer-reviewed journal and the NBCC Visions newsletter.
- ProCounselor, NBCC's online portal where you can track continuing education.
- Inclusion in NBCC's Counselor Find Directory, which helps potential clients locate counselors who maintain their board certification.

Career Options



Public health departments and private therapy facilities hire clinical therapists. The advantage of being a salaried employee, especially when you're starting out, is there is little to no overhead. You don't have to pay for office space, assistants to help with record keeping (unless you're willing to do it yourself), utilities, furniture and everything else that comes with running your own business. As an employee, your liability insurance may also be covered by your employer.

Clinical therapists can also find opportunities in the local social services department, veteran's affairs, schools and child services. Non-profit organizations, hospitals and major corporations also hire clinical therapists.

Use your membership in professional groups to connect with other clinical therapists and ask about job openings in their area. Keep in mind that if you move to another state you'll need to be licensed as a clinical therapist by that state in order to practice.

Finding Clients



Congratulations! You've launched a private practice. Now it's time to find clients and help them. Alert professionals in the community that you are available for referrals. Doctors and clergy who are aware of your private practice and know you

personally are much more likely to recommend your services for new clients.

See Chapter 1 through 4 for more information on how to attract clients.

Helpful Hints for New Clinical Therapists:

Pursuing a career as a clinical therapist is a serious decision that involves careful consideration to be sure the profession is right for you. Career Profiles outlined a list of 5 advantages and 5 disadvantages to work as a clinical therapist:

Advantages

Helping people overcome their challenges is rewarding

Every day you'll be working to help other people improve the quality of their lives. That's a gratifying mission.

Flexible work schedules.

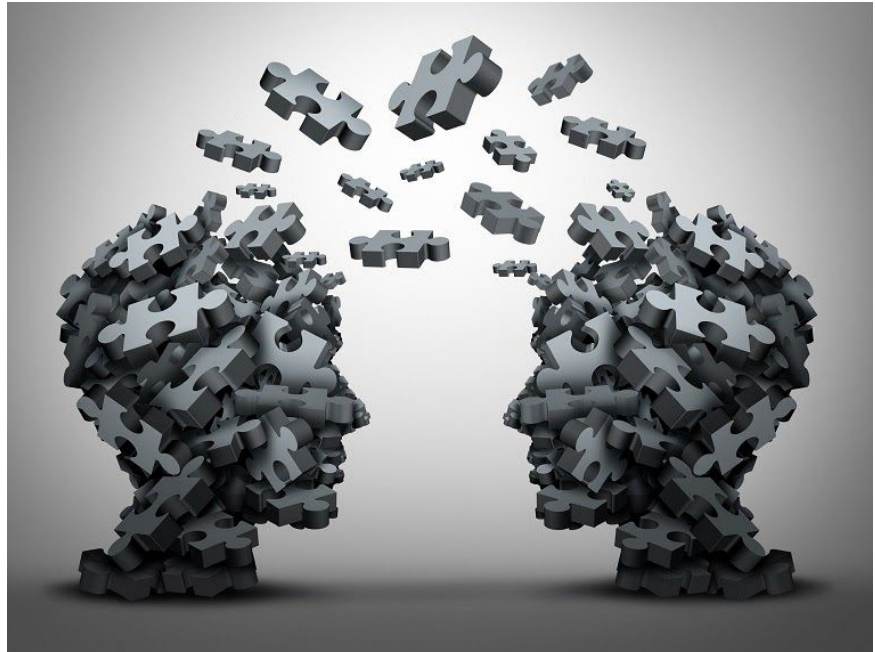
If you're running your own practice, you set your work hours. Come and go as you please. Take vacations when you want to. Spend more time with family and friends.

High earning potential.

As noted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, annual salaries of \$100,000 or more are not uncommon for therapists in private practice. How much you make is up to you.

Self-employment is great.

You have an entrepreneurial spirit. Many clinical therapists get into the profession with the ultimate goal of establishing a private practice. More than a third of mental health professionals are self-employed, according to the bureau of labor statistics.



Work with new people every day.

You'll meet a rich variety of individuals, each with unique challenges. No day is the same when you're a clinical therapist.

Disadvantages

Clients can be stressful and draining.

Helping people overcome and manage their mental and emotional struggles can be both the greatest satisfaction and biggest challenge of being a clinical therapist. You will hear people discuss their worst hardships and most profound struggles. It can take a toll. Successful therapists quickly learn to separate their work life from personal life and practice stress management techniques.

While flexible, your schedule can also be erratic.

If you are on call, realize that client issues are likely going to come up at inconvenient times for you, personally.

Setting up your own practice.

You'll need to find an office and fill it with furniture and equipment, stay current on your liability insurance, pay business taxes, and set up an [online booking](#) & record-keeping system.

Billing issues.

You'll need a way to process and collect fees from clients and their insurance companies, manage paperwork and, most likely, having to refer some clients to a collection agency when they don't pay.

Constant marketing to find new clients.

A business needs clients and yours will be no different. Plan for a marketing budget. Set up and maintain a website. Networking is one of the most effective ways to find new clients. Build relationships with other professionals who can refer clients to your practice. You might consider offering the occasional free seminar or leading a support-group meeting to build your client base.

Final Thoughts



When you become a therapist in any of the disciplines we've covered, you've taken the first step on a career path in which you can truly make a difference in the lives of potentially thousands of people, not just your clients but their families and friends as well. You are restoring joy, bringing wellness back into all of their lives.

Joining one or more professional organizations will help you stay current in your therapist discipline, network with other experts, and enjoy a sense of community. Membership in any of the many different professional groups we've covered in this eBook is also a time-tested way to develop and advance your career because you are able to develop relationships with other professionals who can recommend you for employment and refer clients to your therapy practice.

In addition to affiliations with professional organizations and networking with other therapists in your field, as with any business owner you'll need to carry liability insurance coverage for self-protection.

As your client base grows, you'll need a way to schedule and collect payment from clients. An app for sending clients contracts to sign and forms to complete. An app in which you and your clients can keep track of all of your private appointments and notes. If you try to do all these things yourself, you're at risk of getting swamped and stressed.

The best use of your time ought to be spent growing your business and supporting your clients, not requesting credit card details, sending out appointment reminders, and trying to stay on top of it all. What you want is peace of mind. PocketSuite.io gives you peace of mind in the palm of your hand. PocketSuite was built for one mission: to help anyone with clients, make good income.

We hope this guide will give you a great start in preparing for your career as a therapist. We're here if you need us. Just text us at 415-841-2300 with any questions. We'll be rooting for you every step of the way. Here's to your success!

About Author

Chinwe Onyeagoro is the CEO and Co-Founder of [PocketSuite](#) where she is responsible for strategy, growth, and customer success. PocketSuite has served tens of thousands of independent professionals, freelancers, and small businesses. PocketSuite has 4 million+ appointments booked and over \$180 million in client payments processed. Chinwe has personally raised over \$150 million in funding for businesses. She previously served as president of Great Place to Work with offices in 60 countries and 500+ employees. She also worked for McKinsey & Company and the Pritzker Realty Group (*under former U.S. Secretary of Commerce*). Chinwe has worked as a consultant to the U.S. Small Business Administration, Chase Bank, and dozens of community banks. She coached and advised small businesses across 20 states in the U.S, including women and minority owned businesses.

Chinwe has co-authored publications with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, focused on business financing and financial health. She presented a [TED Talk](#) about access to capital and the small business loan market. Her work has been featured in numerous publications, including the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Fortune, Fast Company, Harvard Business Review, Reuters, TechCrunch, Crain's Chicago Business, Entrepreneur.com, Essence, and more. She serves on the boards of private equity firms and lending institutions that have invested over \$2 Billion in small and medium enterprises that create good jobs in communities. She holds an A.B. in Economics and East Asian Studies from Harvard University and is a Henry Crown Fellow at the Aspen Institute.

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to all the therapists that helped in the making of this reference guide for aspiring Therapists. We appreciate your time and support. We know how busy you all are supporting your clients and keeping them happy, healthy, and sweating!

Shannon Theobald

Dr. Joann Toporowski

Jiryis Shaheen

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