

# Interviewing Strategies for Private Practice Positions

BY

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# About Jeff Zimmerman



- Private practice since 1981 including 22 years as co-founder and managing partner of 7 office interdisciplinary group practice with 20 clinicians
- The Practice Institute, Co-Founder, 2011
- Editor, *Practice Innovations*, Division 42, Independent Practice
- Co-author/Co-editor
  - *If You Build It They Will Come*
  - *The Handbook of Private Practice*
  - *The Ethics of Private Practice*
  - *Financial Management for Your Mental Health Practice*



# What is the Best Practice?

- Co-op
- Single owner
- Multi-owner
- Integrated
- Hybrid



# How to Find a Practice

- Do your homework
- Many positions are not advertised
- Build a relationship
- What do you have of value to the practice?



## Remember: It is a Process

- Set yourself apart from the initial pool of applicants
- Get the first “formal” interview
- Narrow the field again for the second “formal” interview
- Don’t sweat if time passes



# Tips for Interviewing



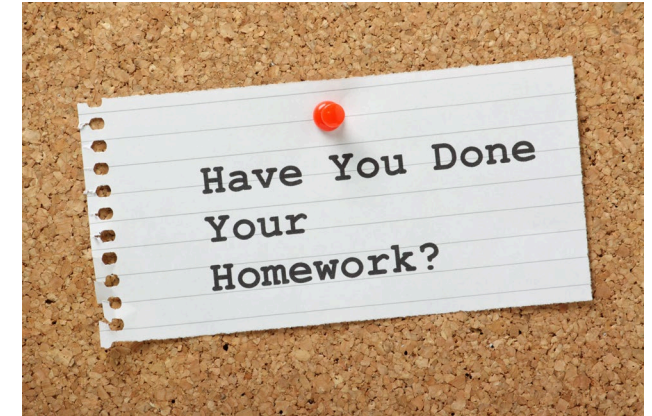
The interview begins at the first contact.



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# Prepare for the Interview

- What are their values?
- Who works there?
- What services do they provide?
- What are they missing?
- What are their challenges?
- How are they structured?



# Preparing for the Interview

- What do you want them to know about you?
- What can you offer that they might need?
- What are your answers to their difficult questions?
- How are you going to stand out from the other applicants?





# Preparing for the Virtual Interview

- Tele-hygiene: lighting, dress (down to your shoes), background, sound, earphones, camera placement, privacy, etc.
- They are seeing and evaluating you in your “office”
- Rehearse the technology and learn their platform well in advance of the interview



# Tips for Standing Out

- Be personable – hiring is a subjective process
- Show your strengths
- *Show* (don't tell) them you are caring and dedicated
- Follow up without hounding them (get buy-in first)
- Be clear if you want the position and it is a top choice



# Create Value: What will you do for them?

- Unique knowledge
- Specialties
- Programs
- Greater access (weekends, nights, etc.)



# Compensation Discussions and Approaches (usually the second interview)



- Salary
- Cost based
- Production based
- Incentive programs
- Equity ownership



# Compensation Packages

- Employee benefits
- Incentives
- Long-term prospects
- Opportunities for learning



# Compensation

**Is 60% more or less than 50%?**



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# Do the Math

JOB OFFER SCENARIOS							
	60%	60%	TOTAL		50%	50%	TOTAL
	1st Year	2nd Year			1st Year	2nd Year	
Number of Patients/Wk	22	30			18	25	
Weeks/Yr	46	46			46	46	
Avg Collected/Visit	\$60	\$100			\$90	\$200	
Direct Compensation	<b>\$36,432</b>	<b>\$82,800</b>	<b>\$119,232</b>		<b>\$37,260</b>	<b>\$115,000</b>	<b>\$152,260</b>
Supervision/Mentoring	2hrs	1hr			3hrs	3hrs	
Training Funding	0	0			0	0	
FICA @ 7.65%)	\$2,787	\$6,334	\$9,121		\$2,850	\$8,798	\$11,648
Health Insurance Premium	4800	5280	\$10,080		4800	5280	\$10,080



# 1099 vs. W-2

## **Independent contractor vs Employee**

- Who decides?
- Is there really a difference?
- Do the math – all the math (taxes, benefits, etc.)





# Non-compete Clauses

- Geographical (# of miles)
- “Our” current patients
- Future patients from “our” referral sources
- Diagnoses?
- Which activities?
- During course of employment and/or after?



# Non-compete Clauses

- What is the practice worried about?
- What are the ethical and possible risk management implications?
- What about enforceability?



# More Tips

- Ask questions (don't be passive)
- Interview with multiple people
- Learn about the culture (what is important to them and to you)
- Understand their obvious and not so obvious needs. Why might they want *you*?



# Some Final Tips

- Be wary if it is too easy or too difficult
- Is this a place *you* want to work?



# Be Sure You Have the Info You Need

**Ask all your questions if you can...**

- Office space and sharing
- Decision-making – seniority, partners, etc.
- What challenges do they face?
- How are they viewing this position in the long-term?



# Be Sure You Have the Info You Need

## **Their response to Covid-19...**

- How are they handling office space? Are they open? What protocols do they follow to protect patients and staff?
- What do they expect from you regarding tele-health?
- Are you expected to extend hours beyond usual business hours if that's when patients are available?
- What platforms do they use, and will they pay for your participation on those platforms?



# Vocabulary

- ***Compensation:*** The value of *all* tangible and intangible benefits you receive from the employer
- ***Incentives:*** Extra compensation for surpassing expectations
- ***Benefits:*** Other items you receive beyond your base pay (e.g., some of your health insurance premiums paid)



# Vocabulary (continued)

- ***Productivity***: A measure of what you produce for the practice (dollars collected, billable hours, etc.).
- ***Ramp-up***: The time it takes (or the process used) to build your caseload to expected levels.
- ***Origination***: The referrals into the practice that you generate.
- ***Restrictive Covenant***: Restrictions on what work you can do outside the practice (sometimes present even after termination of the job).





# Things to Say (but they have to be true)

- “You are my top choice. I am very excited about your offer.”
- “Presuming things go well, I plan to be here for the long term.”
- “How quickly would you expect for my caseload to increase, or for my ramp-up to be?”



# Things to Say (continued)

- “What flexibility is there related to my scheduling, working evenings or weekends, taking mornings off, etc.?”
- “What options are there for varying my practice, starting a niche practice, ordering pertinent equipment?”
- “What financial support do you provide for marketing my services?”



# Things Not to Say

- “I am in negotiations with another practice.”
- “This is all you’re offering?”
- “I could never sign an agreement that says this.”
- “My [friends, partner, professor, colleagues] say...”



# If you get an offer/contract...

- If it is important, it must be in the contract. What is promised verbally isn't real.
- Is the contract one-sided?
- Does the contract refer to other documents that are not included (e.g., Policies and Procedures)
- Read it. Read it. Read it - carefully
- Do the math. Does it make sense when things are good? What about when things aren't ok?
- What are *the specifics* about termination process (monies owed, accounts receivables, non-competes, etc.)?
- Have a practice consultant review it
- Seek legal consultation



# Audience Questions



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