

Ethical Advertising for Medical Professionals

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Most medical professions are subject to a certain level of marketing for business growth and improvement. However, when advertising for a medical service, should a therapist or medical professional not be held to a higher standard as in all practices? Unethical practices in advertising are rampant among the medical community – how can we keep ourselves accountable? Morality and a code of ethics should be taken into account when convincing the outsider, the patient, to come to your practice. Not only will this manage expectations, but prevent disagreements, poor service, and potential malpractice.

Therapists and for-profit medical professionals must develop a strong ethical code for healing as well as a strong business strategy. While this may seem to threaten the profit of the private practice, many healers underestimate the costs of doing business.

New business owners of all types deal with:

- Unexpected expenses,
- Training,
- Illness,
- Vacations,
- Taxes,
- Slow times in their business

And these costs DO add up. Unexpected expenses and unfortunate events can lead to any human questioning their ethics.

As with our patients, it's important to properly diagnose ourselves. Decisions based out of fear or panic can be incredibly harmful to ourselves and others. Successful therapists must find the best way to provide the best services, pay the bills, and promote oneself with integrity.

How can one advertise with integrity? There are 4 simple mainstays to guide you:

1. Never advertise something you don't believe in.
2. Never work with a patient you don't believe you can help.
3. Don't be afraid to refer patients out! Offer someone better suited to the patient.
4. NEVER advertise psychotherapy as "[coaching](#)" to avoid meeting state laws.

Develop realistic expectations with the patient by clearly mapping out what the patient will be doing. Understanding is key to successful growth. It's your job to put patients at ease by making psychotherapy a clear, comforting, progressive process for them.