

# Getting Started: *Marketing* Your Private Practice

A Worksheet and Guide for New Therapists in Private Practice — Co-presented by Private Practice Skills & Heard.

● Print & check off as you go

*Building a private practice is exciting. But it can also be a little overwhelming.*

Between clients, paperwork, and navigating finances and compliance, marketing can feel like one more thing on the plate.

Sometimes getting started is the hardest part. This guide helps with that. Note that this is just a foundation. There are plenty of avenues for paid advertising that can help grow your business, but these are the basics everyone needs.



## 1 Get Clear on Your Brand First

Before any marketing tactic, you need to know what you're marketing. Your brand is your practice's identity — it tells people who you are, who you help, and how. The more specific you get, the easier every other marketing decision becomes.

### ASK YOURSELF

- What is my practice about? What are my core values?
- Who do I serve? (Be specific — not just "adults," but which adults, with what struggles?)
- How do I help them? What makes my approach distinct?
- Does my website, directory profile, and bio reflect these answers clearly?

**TIP** The temptation is to stay broad so you don't "exclude" anyone. In practice, the more specific you are, the more your ideal clients feel seen — and the more likely they are to reach out.

## 2 Set Up Your Free Marketing Foundations

Two of the highest-ROI marketing moves cost nothing but time.

### • Optimizing for Search and AI (SEO & GEO)

When someone Googles "therapist who specializes in [your niche] near me," you want to show up. Similar searches now happen on ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity too.

- Choose a website platform with built-in SEO tools (Squarespace, Wix, and WordPress all have options)
- Let each page answer a specific question potential clients might ask:
  - **Homepage:** Who is this practice for?
  - **Services:** How can you help here?
  - **About:** Why should clients trust you?
  - **Contact:** What are the next steps?
- Use language your clients actually use — not clinical jargon
- Emphasize your credentials to boost credibility in the algorithm
- Include your city/region naturally throughout your site copy
- Keep messaging consistent across all platforms (website, Psychology Today, social media, Google Business Profile)

**”** *The more specific, the better. This has always been true across marketing channels, but it's especially true now in the age of AI.*

MARIE FANG · PRIVATE PRACTICE SKILLS

## 2 Google Business Profile

Continuing from page one. If you see any clients in person, this is non-negotiable — and it's free.

- Go to **business.google.com** and create your profile
- Add your specialty, hours, and a clear description of who you help
- Upload a professional photo and photos of your office space
- Keep your information accurate and updated

**WHY** Google Business Profile lets you show up in Google Search, Google Maps, and increasingly in AI-generated recommendations. Thirty minutes of setup can put you in front of people actively looking for a therapist like you.

## 4 Don't Let the Business Side Derail You

Marketing brings clients in. The business side — taxes, bookkeeping, tracking income — is what keeps your practice running sustainably. Starting early makes everything easier.

- Open a separate business checking account (keep business and personal money separate from day one)
- Track every business expense — software, continuing education, and home-office costs can be deductible
- Set aside a percentage of every payment for taxes (a good starting point is 25–30%)
- Know your quarterly tax deadlines so you're never caught off guard
- Consider working with a financial platform built for therapists so you're not figuring this out alone

**HEARD** Heard is built specifically for therapists in private practice. We handle your bookkeeping, help you prep for taxes, and give you a clear picture of your finances year-round — so you can focus on your clients. [Learn more at joinheard.com](https://joinheard.com)

## 3 Find Out What's Already Working

If you have even a few clients, you have data. Often, the answer is to do more of what's already working.

- Add "How did you hear about me?" to your intake form or initial consultation
  - Keep a simple spreadsheet tracking every new client's referral source
  - Review your list every 1–3 months: where are most clients coming from?
  - Double down on that channel — improve your profile, ask for more referrals, or optimize that page on your site
- **If you're not getting clients yet, look under the hood**
    - Check your website analytics — are people visiting your site at all? (If not, focus on SEO)
    - If people are visiting but not booking, ask a few trusted colleagues to review your site for clarity and trust-building
    - Check your directory profile — does your bio sound like you? Does it speak to your ideal client specifically?
    - For referral networks: follow up with colleagues and ask if they've been passing your name along

**TIP** A marketing channel that isn't working isn't necessarily the wrong channel — it may just need a small tweak. Before you give up on something, try to identify exactly where it's falling short.

**Marketing a private practice is a process, *not a one-time event.***

Start with the basics, track what's working, and build from there. You don't have to do it all at once.