

# TODAY'S PRIVATE PRACTICE

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## **Multiple Streams of Referrals: Strategies for Generating Referrals**

How many referrals are you currently receiving a month? How many professionals out there are regularly making referrals to you? Imagine if you could multiply the number of referrals you currently receive.

Having a referral system is a key strategy for building a practice. Referral contacts easily become clients because someone recommended you to them.

### **Referral Analysis**

- 1. Identify current patterns.** List past situations where you received a referral from a client, colleague, or someone else. Do any patterns emerge?
- 2. Increase awareness.** This week, notice every possible situation where you have the opportunity to connect with a potential referral source. These opportunities are often missed because we don't recognize them.
- 3. Identify reasons** why others would refer to you—the emotional, social, and professional benefits to the person who refers to you.

The insights from reflecting on these things will serve you well in multiplying your referral sources.

### **How to ask for referrals**

#### **From clients:**

This is often awkward, but current and past clients are an excellent source of referrals. Here are some ideas:

- 1.** Send out a newsletter regularly to current and past clients. They need to be reminded about your services so you are fresh on their mind when a friend tells them about their struggles!
- 2.** Have a framed sign on the wall in your lobby or waiting room that says something like: "The greatest compliment we receive from our clients is the referral their friends to our services."

3. Send out a printed “thank-you” card to clients upon termination that says something like: “Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. If you’ve liked what I’ve done for you, tell a friend. Let me help someone else the way I’ve helped you.” It can also mention a list of your services, and should include your business card.
4. Casually mention to your clients that your clients often refer to you.

### **From other professionals:**

Other professionals who offer services that are complementary to yours and see people from your niche market in their office are great sources of referrals.

Reach out to such professionals and develop mutually beneficial relationships. By referring to them, they will be inspired to refer to you.

1. **Identify professionals** who offer complementary services. These may include: other mental health professionals, doctors, attorneys, school professionals, clergy, and others.
2. **Network** with these professionals. Whenever you have the opportunity to introduce yourself, do so. Then, at some point soon, invite them to coffee, lunch, or stop by their office.
3. **When you meet** with these professionals, first find out about them, their services, and ask who their ideal client is. Let them know you will consider referring to them. If they don’t reciprocate, introduce your services, specialties, and a description of your ideal client. Say that you hope they will consider you a resource. After your meeting, send them some of your brochures.
4. **Develop a relationship.** Add these professionals to your mailing list and “keep in touch” regularly. They should receive several mailings from you each year. Periodically set up more meetings for coffee or lunch.
5. **Referral groups.** Many service professionals have formed groups with several other professionals who serve the same niche market. Some of these are intentionally focused on cross-referring. Other groups meet for other reasons, but give you a great way to network with potential referral sources. Get out of the office and participate!