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In this lesson, we'll cover the necessary counselor knowledge, skills, and abilities and the necessary business owner knowledge, skills, and abilities for a successful private practice. We'll also discover how to create a balance between being a counselor and being a business owner. Many times private practice owners have excellent counseling knowledge, skills, and abilities, yet need help and support to improve their business knowledge, skills, and abilities. A successful private practice owner ultimately will have these three domains in both counseling and in business.

So obtaining and retaining clients in private practice requires knowledge, skills, and abilities as a counselor. Some counselor knowledge areas that are important include what are referred to as the CACREP Common Core areas. So the first is professional counseling orientation and ethical practice. The second, social and cultural diversity. The third, human growth and development. Number four, career development. Number five, counseling and helping relationships. Number six, group counseling and group work. Seven, assessment and testing. Number eight, research and program evaluation.

Here are some counselor skills that are important, including using open-ended questions, using minimal encouragers, interpreting non-verbal cues, applying theory. Now these skills are typically learned during a practicum or internship. Here are some counselor abilities that are important. They include-- ability to sit for long periods, ability to leave work at work, ability to multitask, ability to have an open mind.

These counselor knowledge areas, skills, and abilities are essential to a private practice. So even with my small practice, I've established a counselor knowledge routine of exploring new research and approaches as a part of my counseling education units. I've established a counselor skill of proficiency with many different models of therapy. Lastly, I've developed a counseling ability of emotional disengagement from my client's struggles. Now this one still challenges me at times, but I see this as further opportunity for growth in my counseling abilities.

Obtaining and retaining clients in private practice also requires knowledge, skills, and abilities as a business owner. Some business knowledge areas that are important include financial management, such as tracking income, expenses, and tax planning; paying bills and tracking invoices or claims; organizational operations, such as staff meanings, office repair, or maintenance; service promotions, such as advertising, networking, and activity in business and professional organizations. Some business skills that are important are problem-solving, critical thinking, quick decision-making, persistence, friendliness, having a customer-satisfaction mindset.

Some business abilities that are important are public speaking, networking, thick skin to handle rejection and being told no, thick skin in order to tell people no. These business knowledge areas, skills, and abilities are essential to a private practice. Even with my small private practice, I've established a business knowledge routine of billing and tracking claims, a business skill of prompt replies to potential new clients, and a business ability of public speaking. This has enabled me to regularly accept EAP contract work giving presentations and getting paid very well for my time.

Ultimately, in order to achieve success in private practice, you need to find a balance between being a counselor and being a business owner. The skills are all linked, and there are many areas of overlap. Good business people get more business via customer referrals, and good counselors get more business via client referrals.

Many skills will take practice, and counselors will need to give themselves permission to learn business-related knowledge, skills, and abilities if they are lacking in these domains. So cut yourself some slack! We got into this field because we like to help people, not because we are Wharton Business School grads, unless you are. And then if you are, you're totally wasting your time listening to me.

Seek out help from others in the domain where you are weak. When clients struggle, what is one of the most important resources for change? Yes, OK, your amazing counseling ability and skill is one of the most important things, but what about a support network? Some of you working in isolation, without seeking it, needing help will find yourselves continuing to struggle. So reach out and get help when you need it.

Early on in my practice, I started completing these 100-page long applications for insurance companies, and I got way overwhelmed. And I reached out to a friend with a successful practice. He put me in touch with his office manager, and she was totally willing to complete all of the necessary paperwork and get me on with some very key insurance companies for only a small fee.

So here's what we covered in this lesson. First, we talked about counselor knowledge, skills, and abilities-- next, business owner knowledge, skills, and abilities. Last, we covered the balance between being a counselor and a business owner.

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