



# **Your Professional Toolbox:**

**A Step-by-Step Guide  
to Setting Up a  
Mental Health Private Practice**

**By**

**Brian D. Carr, Ph.D.**

**Behavioral Health Associates, P.C.  
Copyright, 2001 by BHA, P.C.**

## **Your Professional Toolbox: A Step-by-Step Guide to Setting Up a Mental Health Private Practice**

Published by:

Behavioral Health Associates, P.C.

3410-22<sup>nd</sup> Place

Lubbock, Texas 79410

[www.healingtalk.com](http://www.healingtalk.com)

Copyright, 2000 Behavioral Health Associates, P.C. All rights reserved. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form (except as detailed), by photostat, microfilm, retrieval system or any means now known or later devised, without written permission of the author.

Distributed by Behavioral Health Associates, P.C.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: Author and Publisher have used their best efforts in preparing this book. Behavioral Health Associates, P.C. and author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties or merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. There are no warranties which extend beyond the descriptions contained in this paragraph. The accuracy and completeness of the information provided herein and the opinions stated herein are not guaranteed or warranted to produce any particular results, and the advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every individual. Neither Behavioral Health Associates, P.C. nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

### **About the Author**

Brian D. Carr, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist in the State of Texas, where he has been in full-time private practice since 1990. His practice offers a variety of specialized services in the area of health psychology. He is also Director of "The Achievement Center" which offers comprehensive child counseling and assessment services.

In addition to his clinical work he is President of "Wired Brush Digital Designs". Since 1995 this Internet management firm ([www.wiredbrush.com](http://www.wiredbrush.com)) has created over 60 commercial Web sites including the Texas Psychological Association ([www.texaspsyc.org](http://www.texaspsyc.org)).

He is a regular presenter to various organizations and serves as Webmaster for a variety of professional and charitable organizations.

# Contents at a Glance

---

Chapter 1:	Framing the Practice	1
Chapter 2:	The Bottom Line: Money and Your Practice	12
Chapter 3:	Location, Location, Location	17
Chapter 4:	Office Equipment	21
Chapter 5:	Office Furniture and Arrangement	30
Chapter 6:	Office Staff and Outsourcing	37
Chapter 7:	Documentation: The Office Manager Speaks	44
Chapter 8:	Credentialing your Practice	53
Chapter 9:	The General Hospital World	58
Chapter 10:	Record Management and Security	67
Chapter 11:	Reimbursement: Insurance	74
Chapter 12:	Reimbursement: Private Pay	92
Chapter 13:	Marketing: Building Your World	96
Chapter 14:	Marketing: Getting Your Message Out	115
Chapter 15:	Specialized Services: Finding a Home	124
Chapter 16:	Evolving Markets: Staying on Top	139
References		143

## Appendices

Appendix A:	Hospital Organizational Chart
Appendix B:	Room Sign
Appendix C:	Examples of Targeted Mail-outs
Appendix D:	Office Service Protocols
Appendix E:	Referral Forms
Appendix F:	Office Intake Forms
Appendix G:	News Releases
Appendix H:	Logo Design
Appendix I:	Differential Physician Letters
Appendix J:	List of Biofeedback and Practice Software Vendors
Appendix K:	Clinic Biofeedback Forms
Appendix L:	Community Marketing Examples
Appendix M:	Continuing Education Flyers
Appendix N:	Misc. Office Forms

Appendix O: Example Contracts  
Appendix P: Personnel Forms  
Appendix Q: Practice Brochure Examples  
Appendix R: Employee Assistance Program Info.

What's On the CD

# Table of Contents

---

Chapter 1:	<b>Framing the Practice</b>	<b>1</b>
	So Are You Ready?	2
	Good Fences Make Good Neighbors	5
	Are You Willing to Live in the Jungle?	6
	Assembling Your Team: Don't Forget the Talent!	10
Chapter 2:	<b>The Bottom Line: Money and Your Practice</b>	<b>12</b>
	What Are You Worth?	12
	Direct Benefits: Show Me the Money!	13
	Indirect Benefits: The Hidden Value	14
	The Costs of Business	15
	Sliding Scales: Difficult to Hold Onto	15
	You Are Worth What You Think	16
Chapter 3:	<b>Location, Location, Location</b>	<b>17</b>
	A Medically-Based Practice	18
	A Community-Based Practice	19
	Other Factors to Consider in Location	19
Chapter 4:	<b>Office Equipment</b>	<b>21</b>
	Computers and a Mental Health Practice	21
	Printer Components	24
	Networking your Office	25
	Internet Operations	25
	Practice Software	27
	Other Office Equipment	28
Chapter 5:	<b>Office Furniture and Arrangement</b>	<b>30</b>
	The Waiting Room	30
	The Business Office/Area	32
	The Practitioner's Office	33
	Lighting and Security	35
	Restrooms	35
	Your Office and the Human Touch	35
Chapter 6:	<b>Office Staff and Outsourcing</b>	<b>37</b>
	Working with You versus Working for You	37
	What Do You Need?	38
	The Office Manager	39
	The Insurance Claims Specialist	40
	The Receptionist	41
	Business Service as a Process	42
Chapter 7:	<b>Documentation: The Office Manager Speaks</b>	<b>44</b>
	All Relationships are Structured	44
	Provide Help but Don't Starve	45
	A Word about Hospital Consultations	46
	Client Record Keeping: The Key to Success	47
	Financial Records: The Pulse of Your Practice	49

Chapter 7:	<b>(continued)...</b>	
	Third Party Reimbursement Documentation	49
	A Special Problem in Billing	50
	Doing What is Right: Accepting the Situation	52
Chapter 8:	<b>Credentialing your Practice</b>	<b>53</b>
	You've got Your Uniform: Now You Need to Get on the Team	53
	Hospital and Agency Practice: Walking the Fine Line	55
	Is It Worth All the Trouble?	57
	Slow But Steady Wins the Race	57
Chapter 9:	<b>The General Hospital World</b>	<b>58</b>
	A World of Excitement...and Fear	58
	Understanding the Zone	59
	Watching Yourself	61
	Making Yourself Useful	63
	Helping the Hospital Help You	66
Chapter 10:	<b>Record Management and Security</b>	<b>68</b>
	Common Sense and Professional Guidelines	68
	The Process of Documentation	72
	E-Mail and Telecommunications	72
Chapter 11:	<b>Reimbursement: Insurance</b>	<b>75</b>
	Third Party Reimbursement	75
	The Advent of Managed Care	76
	Other Factors in Managed Care	77
	Medicare	78
	Medicaid	83
	Workers Compensation	85
	Commercial or Private Insurance	88
	Managing the Information Demand	90
	It is the Nature of the Situation	91
Chapter 12:	<b>Reimbursement: Private Pay</b>	<b>92</b>
	Getting It Right From the Start	92
	Sign Here Please	93
	Sliding Down the Scale: Does it Help Those Who Need It?	93
	When Problems Arise	94
Chapter 13:	<b>Marketing: Building Your World</b>	<b>96</b>
	Referral Sources	96
	Understanding the Healthcare Provider	98
	Taking the First Step: Making It to the Office	101
	Developing Rapport with the Healthcare System	107
	Community Rapport Building	111
	Relationship with Professional Peers	112
	The Media: They Need Us, We Need Them	112

Chapter 14:	<b>Marketing: Getting the Message Out</b>	<b>115</b>
	Make Gutenberg Proud: Written Marketing Materials	116
	Business Cards	116
	Practice Information Brochures	117
	Targeted Service Description Handouts	119
	Telephone Advertisement	120
	Newspaper Advertisement	120
	Targeted Mail-outs	121
Chapter 15:	<b>Specialized Services: Finding a Home</b>	<b>124</b>
	Psychophysiological Training (Biofeedback)	124
	Assessment Services	131
	Educational Services	136
Chapter 16:	<b>Evolving Markets: Staying on Top</b>	<b>139</b>
	Tele-health Services	139
	Gerontology Services	140

References		<b>143</b>
------------	--	------------

## Appendices

Appendix A:	Hospital Organizational Chart
Appendix B:	Room Sign
Appendix C:	Examples of Targeted Mail-outs
Appendix D:	Office Service Protocols
Appendix E:	Referral Forms
Appendix F:	Office Intake Forms
Appendix G:	News Releases
Appendix H:	Logo Design
Appendix I:	Differential Physician Letters
Appendix J:	List of Biofeedback and Practice Software Vendors
Appendix K:	Clinic Biofeedback Forms
Appendix L:	Community Marketing Examples
Appendix M:	Continuing Education Flyers
Appendix N:	Misc. Office Forms
Appendix O:	Example Contracts
Appendix P:	Personnel Forms
Appendix Q:	Practice Brochure Examples
Appendix R:	Employee Assistance Program Info.

## What's On the CD