

Attracting New Clients

Part One-The Backward Feed and the Promise

Whether you are building your practice from scratch or attempting to maintain or increase your caseload, new clients are a necessity. Word of mouth referrals from past or existing clientele has always been the most effective form of attracting new clients to my myofascial release practice. When I began in private practice, I felt that I could and should be able to receive new referrals directly from physician's offices. So I undertook a campaign of calling these offices, sending them promotional materials, and trying to set up meetings with them. I don't want to say that this method failed completely, but the number of clients I received via this route was miniscule. Many of the doctors liked the concepts that I was presenting, but being an "out-of-network" physical therapist when it came to most health insurances, most were deterred from sending their patients to me. Educating them on the fact that many health insurance systems allow their members to use out-of-network providers did not seem to matter. I had no problem having these doctors write prescriptions for their patients who chose to come to me when referred from other sources, they just never seemed to be able to initiate referrals directly. Maybe it is the inner workings of how the HMO system operates that applies pressure on the MD's to keep patients within the network of approved providers. What I have found to be invaluable is to work from your existing caseload to mine backward referrals from their physician. Let me give you an example:

I received a call from a gentleman nearly a year ago. He had had two years of unrelenting prostate region pain. He had gone through the normal course of medications for pain as well as antibiotics, both from his primary as well as from his urologist, but had failed to improve. Through his own searching, he came upon the book "A Headache in the Pelvis", which explained prostate region pain from a different perspective. He was contemplating traveling across the country to participate in the Stanford University treatment protocol for chronic prostatitis when he came across my practice while doing an Internet search. Through the myofascial release treatment that I provided, he found lasting relief from his pelvic pain. His results from a previously uncorrectable problem caught the attention of his urology group, who contacted me for more information. Like many specialist offices who deal with chronic pain conditions, they have a fair amount of patients who do not respond to what they feel is the normal course of treatment and were more than happy to send them along to me. This group, having seen the results firsthand, became less concerned about me not taking insurance. They have become a regular source of referrals for my practice for men and women with pelvic pain issues that have not responded to standard intervention. They do not intervene beforehand by warning the patient that I do not participate in HMO reimbursement; they leave that up to me. By now I've established a standard type of conversation that I have with clients when I explain my reimbursement policy. This is what I term the backward referral. Let your successes in the clinic do the selling for you! Nurture this relationship by empowering your clients to give their caregivers feedback. This is one way to truly build your practice!

Another method that has helped me over the years to get potential or new clients to try my services is by the promise I make to them. My promise: They should feel lasting positive changes within 2-3 sessions, or possibly my services are not what they need. I can make this claim from having seen so many different clients and conditions over the years. I am able to help them create changes within this time period so that they can determine whether myofascial release is right for them. This is truly a powerful statement to make and one that empowers them to take charge of their wellness. What is the risk in making this promise? If someone does not feel changes after the 2-3 session promise, they may move on. This happens on rare occasions, but my retention rate is quite high, as most clients do feel positive, lasting changes within this time period. They may not be at their goal, but they have a vision of MFR helping them to where they would like to be. I've found the risk to be very low and have used this as an effective practice tool for years now. Consider making the 2-3 session promise to your new clients and see how it works for your practice!

Be Well,

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