



FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions...

(with answers!)

I've read through the website. What's the next step?

Here are some important things to consider before we set up a time to meet, see the office, sign a contract and get you a key and a listing on the website, We call them the "Who/What/When/Where" of Wise Counsel & Comfort....

1. **WHO** do you want to work with? What's your ideal client population? You may choose to be a 'general' practitioner and/or have a special focus of practice. If you plan on working with a specialized population (ex: children, youth, families, couples, etc.), you must have sufficient education and clinical experience to do so.
2. **WHAT** days/hours do you want to practice? Weeknight evenings and weekend appointments are slightly more in demand by clients, and with many clinicians as well. Knowing times you prefer to see clients is necessary to help you find a location that will meet your needs. If you need very specific hours/days, you may need to be more flexible about which location you practice at.
3. **WHEN** do you want to begin? We sign contracts NO EARLIER than 2 weeks before your start date, and you can begin mid-month. If you aren't planning on starting until a few months from now, we can talk with you and make tentative plans. But, be aware that the hours and days available today at a particular location may well not be available a month or two down the line.
4. **WHERE** do you want to practice? We have 17 locations, 65+ offices and ALL have colleagues with thriving practices. There is no one location that is better or more profitable than another. Each location has it's own unique feel and features. Some clinicians prefer to practice close to home or close to their other job, others enjoy being in a different part of town. You may choose the location based on ease of mass-transit, parking or disability access. It will be worth it to look at the interactive map, understand the parking, neighborhood, and general 'feel' of the area before deciding where you want to practice. If you have a strong preference for a specific location, you may need to be flexible with the hours you work.

Once you answer these questions, feel free to contact Courtney Woodward at courtneywoodward@yahoo.com to nail down the particulars and schedule a time to meet.

Wait, I'm not licensed yet! Can I still be a part of Wise Counsel & Comfort?

Certainly you can, but we require that you have already initiated the process of registration with your licensure board. You will need to have selected and signed an agreement with a clinical supervisor (we have some great LPC/LCSW/LMFT supervisors available through WCC who offer discounted fees for WCC colleagues). Once that's accomplished, we can help you in establishing a "practice location" which is required for registration as an intern.

Wait, I'm not a "counselor" - I'm a life coach/hypnotherapist/Reiki practioner/spiritual director/...

Can I still practice with WCC? Most likely, the answer is yes, as long as you've completed appropriate professional training and carry professional liability insurance.

So, what are my overall costs to get started?

Here's a breakdown of your initial costs at the signing of the contract:

1. First month's rent (or prorated portion if you begin mid-month)
2. \$100 refundable key/damage deposit
3. \$50 for each initial website listing (for portland-therapist.com and/or portland-couplescounseling.com)\$150-\$200 in deposit/fees

If the overall costs of beginning seem daunting, please talk to us about a payment plan for the deposit & web fees.

What if I change my mind during the contract year?

It's important to realize that you are signing a 1 year legally binding contract. The expectation is that you will fulfill the entirety of the contract, unless there are EXTREME circumstances.

What if I want to change locations? Can I be in 2 different locations?

Wise Counsel clinicians practice at just one location. However, if you choose to change locations and there is availability, we will certainly support you in making that change. All you need to do is pay the \$35 web change fee.

What if I want to change my hours? Can I add just one more hour to the schedule?

If there's availability, you're welcome to change your scheduled hours. There is a \$25 fee to cover the costs of the schedule change. Colleagues schedules are only set in 5 hour increments (5/10/15/20/25 +) If you have a client that needs to be seen on a regular basis outside of your schedule (rather than a crisis or make up appointment), you either need to change your schedule to accommodate that or add an additional 5hrs/week. If you are regularly seeing pro-bono client, we are glad to block that extra hour outside your schedule



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How do clients find me?

We have found that there are 4 main ways a client can come to you...

1. Our websites get tremendous traffic; For most new colleagues, the majority of your clients will find you on portland-therapist.com. The client reads your profile and calls or emails you directly. Your profile information will have YOUR phone number, so having a well written profile with a great picture and video are important.
2. YOU have done your own effective outreach and marketing. We recommend that you have good business cards, get your profile on online directories (psychologytoday.com, goodtherapy.com, etc.) local online resources willamettweek.com (free), Mercuryonline (free), and Craigslist (\$10 first post, \$5/week). Make sure everyone you know realizes that you've begun private practice ~ get your name out there!
3. YOU have done effective outreach and with other clinicians. One of the benefits of being part of Wise Counsel is being part of a larger community. We offer trainings, monthly peer consults, book clubs, and social activities that allow you to meet and network with other clinicians. Being actively involved in our private FaceBook group is an important way to nurture cross-referrals.
4. If a potential client calls the WCC number, we have a great administrative assistant who completes a brief telephone screening and refers those clients to WCC clinicians. Most of those callers, however, have very specific needs and are requesting particularly low fees and specialties. Most viewers online will call the individual clinician directly.

What's the flexibility in the schedule? Do my hours have to stay the same for the whole contract?

We anticipate that your practice will grow and changes through the year., so we are glad to add hours as you grow, in 5 hour increments. We recommend that you 'bump up' your hours when you're at about 70% capacity, which allows for 'wobble room' in your schedule (for crisis appointments, no-fee consultations, etc). If you need to change your schedule there is a \$25 fee. If you need to decrease your hours, we just require 30 days notice.

How long will it take for me to get my first client?

We've had clinicians get a client their very first day and we've had clinicians who have waited 3-4 months to get their first call. With that being said, there is a general 'bell curve' of success. About 20% of WCC colleagues are VERY successful right out of the gate. They've been able to build client numbers quickly and within 4 months are at 10-15hrs/week. (These clinicians are those who realize they are launching a business and put serious effort and time into building that business with face to face outreach, networking and marketing.) Another 20% have a tougher time. It can take them 6-8 months to get a solid 5 clients. The bulk of clinicians, about 60%, are able to get a solid 5-8 clients within 6 months. Generally, the lower your fees, the more calls you'll tend to get in the first months. Remember, it takes work to build any small business. It's important that you put your time and energy into marketing, networking, and planning your business.

Do I need a business license? What about an LLC? Professional liability insurance?

In Multnomah County, you may be exempt from the requirement to complete a business license application if you anticipate your gross annual income will be less than \$50,000. Take the time to contact the jurisdiction of your practice location (Portland, Lake Oswego, Gresham, Beaverton / Multnomah or Washington County) to get precise instructions about the need or exemption from the business licence requirement. You must carry professional liability insurance to practice with the Wise Counsel community.

You do not need to have an LLC or other legal corporate or company structure in order to legally begin professional practice. Most clinicians operate their professional practice as a "Sole Proprietor." If you have questions, reach out to an attorney, an accountant or your professional association for guidance on this question.

What are the general fees/rates that clinicians charge? Can I change my fees as my practice grows?

We recommend that interns and new clinicians start 'low and slow.' It is important that your fees reflect not only your education but your counseling experience as well. One of the reasons we offer low rent options is so that beginning clinicians can offer lower fees to the community. It's a GREAT way to build your practice quickly. Here is a general breakdown of clinician fees and the rent options:

"Nearly Non-Profit" (all clients under \$40/session) = Clinician charges \$20-\$40/session

"Discounted" (1/2 caseload under \$40/session) = Clinician charges \$30-\$80 /session

"Standard" (experienced, licensed clinicians, still offering sliding scale) = Clinician charges \$50-\$125

Ok, now I'm REALLY ready. What do I do?

Just contact Courtney Woodward, our Community Coordinator, via email at courtneywoodward@yahoo.com She'll get back to you pretty quickly (usually in 24hrs) and you'll be able to discuss the next step. You can also call her at 971-219-9251, but email is faster. :)