

Business Mastery

§3 Exploring Career Paths

*An Insider's Look at Group
Practice Settings*

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An Insider's Look at Group Practice Settings

What to Expect

- Key Aspects of Group Practice Settings

Wellness Centers

Specialty Centers

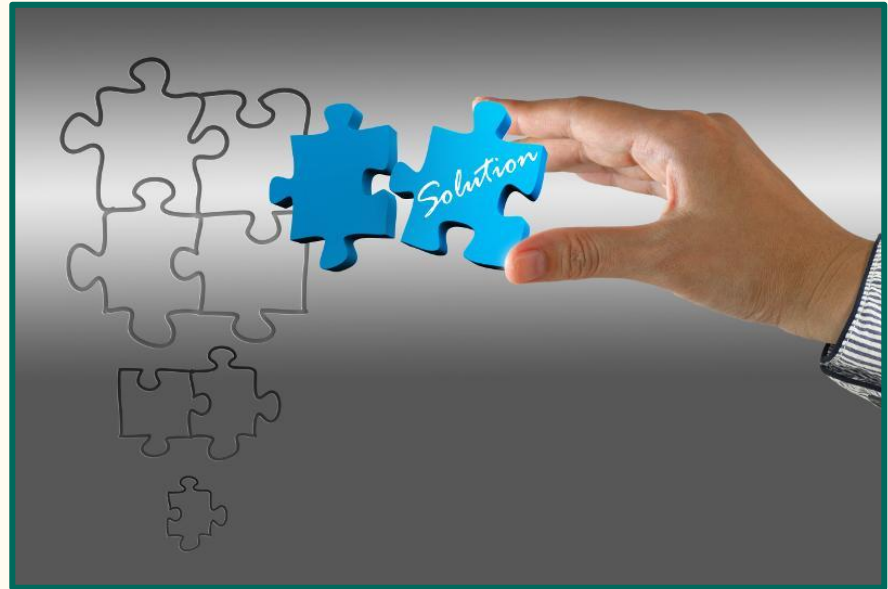


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KEY

Terms

- ❑ Associate
- ❑ Associations
- ❑ Business Plan
- ❑ Ethical Dilemma
- ❑ Goals
- ❑ Group Practice Settings
- ❑ Holistic Healthcare Clinics
- ❑ Image
- ❑ Legal Status
- ❑ Marketing
- ❑ Medical Clinics
- ❑ Office Logistics

KEY

Terms

- ❑ Policy and Procedure Manual
- ❑ Self-Assessment
- ❑ Specialty Clinics

- ❑ Values
- ❑ Wellness Centers

An Insider's Look at Group Practice Settings

*Working **for** yourself can be rewarding; yet, working **by** yourself can also be lonely. Joining an environment with other professionals can be a great way to add collaboration and camaraderie to your practice*

- Many wellness practitioners join forces with other healthcare providers to create associations, group practices, and partnerships, potentially sharing some overhead expenses.

What to Expect

- These alliances can be quite beneficial for the practitioners and their clients.
 - Often provides a variety of wellness services under one roof
 - Offers added flexibility when you're ill or want to take a vacation, as you can make arrangements with other staff
 - Can be highly cost-effective.
 - Primary settings are holistic healthcare clinics, wellness centers, specialty clinics, or medical clinics.
 - Carefully consider if you join the group as an independent contractor as finances tend to be complex.

Key Aspects of Group Practice Settings

- Aspects to consider include:
 - Common Values Roles, Goals & Expectations
 - Self-Assessment
 - Interviews
 - Peer Support
 - Legal Status
 - Finances
 - Product Sales
 - Marketing
 - Office Logistics
 - Scheduling Clients



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Overall Success Tips for Working in a Group Practice

- **Interview practitioners** who work in a group practice to gain insights into this type of work. (If you're a student, do this while you're in school.)
- **Clarify your reasons** for entering into, or developing, a group practice.
- **Make a list of essential qualities** you want in the people who make up the group practice.
- **Review the group's written materials:** mission, policies, and promotional materials.
- **Develop a detailed agreement** that defines roles and expectations.
- **Develop a long-term business plan** and a professional code of ethics.
- **Negotiate practice boundaries.** Also, be sure to define parameters for working with clients outside of the group setting.

Overall Success Tips for Working in a Group Practice

- **Clarify what is expected** of all group members when not directly working with clients.
- **Include each practitioner's name on the office lease.** If that isn't an option, create a separate written agreement that all members sign.
- **Budget accordingly.** Be prepared to do cash flow forecasting, particularly if you receive deferred insurance payments.
- **Create a written telephone script** for greeting callers.
- **Coordinate office decor,** as first impressions do count.
- **Create a group action plan** for product sales, including goals and a budget.
- **Schedule time** for a marketing review each week.

Wellness Centers

- Offer opportunities for professional development through mentoring or tuition reimbursement
 - As with medical settings, wellness centers also provide opportunities for case management
 - When a team of highly skilled wellness practitioners works together to create optimal support for a client, positive results can be greatly amplified.
 - An ethical dilemma can occur while working part-time in a wellness center and maintaining a small home-based practice

Specific Success Tips for Working in a Wellness Center

- **Educate yourself.** If you work in a chiropractic or acupuncture clinic, you need a firm grasp of clinical terminology and protocol, and skill at insurance charting.
- **Make full use of the group benefits.** Enjoy what is provided for you, such as scheduling services, laundry, and marketing.
- **Honor the Chain of Command.** Follow the center's protocol regarding how new clients are handled, charting requirements, and cross-referral protocols.
- **Identify your strengths.** Give each member of the practice a demonstration or a handout describing how your services can complement their services.

Specialty Centers

- Businesses specializing in a wellness service, e.g., acupuncture, massage, or chiropractic care, often at a discount.
 - Range from a group of like-minded practitioners joining forces to nationwide franchises that encourage clients to become members and get discounted treatments
 - Typical to be working as part of a team made up of a variety of other professionals
 - Can kick-start your practice in this setting

Specific Success Tips for Working in a Specialty Center

- **Make full use of the group benefits.** If you're an employee, enjoy what is provided for you, such as scheduling services, laundry, marketing, and CE opportunities.
- **Differentiate yourself.** There can be a lot of competition between practitioners when you all do the same thing. Go the extra mile with clients so your work stands out. Improve bookings by incorporating small touches such as aromatherapy or hot towels during the session.
- **Learn to sell products.** Increase your income by using retail products in your sessions. If a client enjoys the product, you can tell him how to purchase it for home use.

Highlights

Within a group practice, you would typically share office space and expenses with other practitioners.

Group practices may be formed as an association or partnership.

The primary settings for group practices are holistic health care clinics, wellness centers, specialty clinics, or medical clinics.

Highlights *(cont.)*

Group practices require written roles, goals, and expectations. Clarifying what is to be done in detail will ensure the group's values and vision are met. Office meetings can be a good way to keep everyone up to date regarding these and discuss any concerns or new ideas.

By gaining knowledge about various working environments and business structures, you can determine the setting that best fits your personality and career interests.

Highlights *(cont.)*

One of the strongest benefits to being in a group practice is marketing. Those expenses are shared, as is energy and expertise.

In wellness settings, clients are primarily interested in preventive care, stress management, relief from everyday aches and pains, or support for health challenges. This setting offers opportunities for professional development and tuition reimbursement programs. It can also be easier to get insurance reimbursement if you align with a primary care provider.

Highlights (*cont.*)

Working in a specialty center that focuses on one type of wellness service such as acupuncture, chiropractic, or massage is a good way to gain valuable experience and continuing education benefits. However, the compensation is often on the low end. These types of centers share many commonalities with wellness centers.

Develop a good sense of the competitive landscape; this will help you realistically assess your business prospects and communicate what sets your business apart from others.