



PRACTICE PEARLS

## 3 Tips When Opening an Integrative Clinic

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The average patient is becoming increasingly savvy and educated about their own care. More and more people are looking for a one-stop shop where they can have multiple needs addressed by care providers working together to treat sometimes-complex health conditions. It takes practitioners who can recognize if a patient needs to be directed to another clinician when the condition is beyond their scope. It takes partners who understand the goal is how to best serve the needs of each patient.

If this is the type of patient you are looking to attract and the practice you want to build, then it's critical you understand how and why certain practitioners are willing to work together in this type of an environment so you can find the right partners to build a truly integrative practice. Here are three tips to help you get started.

#1: Focus on the Patients



The demands and needs of opening an integrative clinic can seem overwhelming at times, even with the best of business plans. While financial decisions are important and finding the right building space is also critical, it's important to remember *why* you are doing this in the first place. Keep those patients you want to serve at the forefront of your mind as you make these other decisions and things will begin to come into focus.

For example, when looking at a particular building for your office space, think about it from your potential patients' point of view. Is the space easily accessible? Does it convey the right aesthetic feel you are looking for? Is it a calming place or is it cluttered? How will patients and practitioners navigate back and forth between treatment rooms? Chances are, if it flows well for your patients, you and your team will be able to make it work without any issues.

## #2: Build the Right Team

This is perhaps the most critical step in building an integrative practice. Just because you and different care providers reside under the same roof doesn't automatically make you an integrative clinic. You have to find clinicians who share your vision of putting the patient first, and are truly committed to integrative care and working together to achieve the best results for each patient.

You will need to have some thorough and serious conversations with your potential partners to make sure you understand their patient care philosophy, so you can determine if they will be a good fit. For example, let's say you have a good friend who is a chiropractor and has been bugging you for years to open an integrative clinic so you can work together more closely, since you already refer patients to each other's offices. Sounds like a match made in heaven.

However, the conversations are going to get a lot more difficult if you dive in, only to discover that your partner really isn't excited about your women's health focus and is looking to treat athletes interested in peak performance.

It's critical to find the people who share your vision and are on board with what you want to accomplish. You need to find like-minded practitioners who see what you see and are on board in achieving the same goals.

Maintaining two different environments in the same office will never work. Find people who feel at home with your vision, rather than trying to squeeze someone into a space that just won't work for them (or you) in the long run.

### #3: Be Ready for Challenges

While the advantages of an integrative clinic can be undeniably attractive, it's important to recognize and be ready for the challenges that will inevitably come your way. While the benefits of convenience and built-in referrals can seem too good to be true, the administrative framework that needs to be in place to handle it all can be a challenge to implement.

Some of the first challenges you'll need to address are related to equipment and basic logistics. For example, determining how much space you need for each practitioner and who will ultimately sign the lease are important decisions to hammer out. Figuring out what equipment, diagnostic tools, technology, and software you will need, and how to pay for it, are other challenges you'll need to address before you even open your doors.

And then there is the marketing of the practice to consider. You need to think about the practice as a whole *and* in terms of each individual practitioner. Assuming your marketing is a success and you have patients coming through your doors, you need to figure out scheduling, billing, accounting, and insurance (both for your business and to determine what type of insurance you will accept from patients).

### Practical Pearls

All of this might seem overwhelming, but when you keep the focus on your patients, build the right team and prepare for the challenges, you can achieve your dream of opening an integrative clinic; and reach the needs of more patients in your community looking for a one-stop shop for their health and wellness needs.

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