

A Day in the Life of an Online Therapist

If there is one thing I've discovered in being an online therapist, it's that there is no typical day in the life of an online therapist. Fortunately, that's just how I like it!



STEPHANIE ADAMS

As the independent business owner of Beginnings Counseling and Consulting, on any given day I'm the staff counselor, life coach, accountant, marketing director, PR representative, administrative assistant, IT person and more. Though that might sound really intimidating, I like that it gives me incredible freedom to create the business I think will serve my clients best.

Though there are many different ways to conduct online therapy, I operate through 4 means: live videoconference, live chat, phone, and email. All these methods are facilitated by the online practice management and therapy tool I use - counsel.com. You may recognize the name as they've recently been verified by OTI! I've been using counsel.com for months now, and it's the only system I've ever seen that completely includes everything I need for a session: PayPal support, note-taking applications, intake forms, client session reminder emails, quality video feed and more. It even stores securely old chat sessions so that I can review them before a client meeting! Although I don't have a client session on every given day, most days, if not all, I have a client email or call to respond to. My advertising hasn't changed much since my pre-online practice days. I list my practice in *Psychology Today* much like many brick-and-mortar counselors, but instead of a local address, I give my website address and write "Online-Only Practice." Though I still get a lot of confused calls looking for my building, I also get a lot of people that call to say, "I hear your practice is online. Can you tell me more about that?"

Most days, I also try to apply to my work a few principles that have defined my online-only practice.

1. When talking to potential clients, I emphasize the benefits of online therapy for their particular demographic. Since online therapy is somewhat new, people want to know why they should use it as opposed to what else is out there. My online practice is focused on emerging adults - those people that are just beyond their parent's complete supervision but not yet wholly on their own. So, every time I get a call from a parent or a potential young adult client, I explain: my generation and the ones since have grown up on technology. Because of this, many times I can elicit more from my clients with the use of online tools than I could sitting face-to-face in a room with them. Older teenagers and young adults communicate by email, by chat, by phone. It's more client-focused and more respectful to offer them the option of therapy on their own terms.
2. I create systems for myself to more easily address problems that arrive. For example: Usually, if I have technology failure issue, it's not with my computer or counsel.com, because I check frequently to make sure everything is running properly! So a project I'm working on right now is creating an automatic email that I can send to clients the day before our first session, reminding them to do all software updates on their computer, update their flash player, and restart their computer before we meet for the first time. Since I'm the sole proprietor, I know if I implement a system, it will save me trouble later on.
3. I don't allow myself to apologize for what I have to offer. For a while, I felt a little guilty because I couldn't offer private counseling at a physical location as well as an online location. I focused on the fact that offering online therapy was

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Life Counseling: A Positive And Fun Therapeutic Experience
 Ever think that because therapy involves sometimes talking about sad things means it has to be a sad process? It doesn't!
 What could be more fun than finally getting rid of things in your life that have been holding you back...and feeling FREE for the first time?
 What if you looked at the future...and felt HOPE?
 What if the relationship you were in no longer felt dead...but ALIVE with possibilities?
 What if you could find out NOW how to live the life you dream of right where you are today?

Secure Client Area
 Recent Blog Entries
 Quiz: How Well Do YOU Maintain Balance?
 Live Until You Die
 Can You Believe In It?
 What is E-Therapy? Part Two: Ph... Therapy

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convenient for me and blamed myself for not finding a way to offer a physical location to the clients that called requesting it. But the fact was, those people that called looking for a physical location weren't yet my clients, and so I had no obligations to them. I have many fine local places to refer callers to when I cannot work with them. When I don't focus on what my practice can't do, I can focus on the many benefits it has to offer instead, for example, to college students who don't have cars to come see me, or moms who can't pay for both babysitters and therapy sessions.

Online therapy has helped me grow in both my therapy skills and in my confidence as a practitioner. I believe the healthier and happier the therapist, the better that they are able to help their

clients! I have been in online practice for over a year now, and I don't see a point in my life in which it will not be at least part of what I have to offer clients.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephanie Adams, MA, LPC provides E-Therapy and E-Coaching at [Beginnings Counseling and Consulting](#). She also serves part-time as the staff counselor for the Sexual Assault Resource Center. Stephanie runs the blog and social networking site [Beginning Counselor](#) and is the co-author of *The Beginning Counselor's Survival Guide*. Her next project is an innovative business education program for private practice therapists called [MBA In Private Practice](#).