



# A THERAPIST'S GUIDE TO DIGITAL MARKETING

LEARN TO MASTER THE MARKETING GAME AND GROW YOUR PRACTICE

WITH CONNOR MCCLENAHAN, PSYD

# WELCOME

## YOU'VE DREAMED OF THIS MOMENT



My guess is you've fantasied about what it would feel like to finally coast in your private practice. Maybe you'd be able to raise your rates, increase/decrease your client load, or bring on other clinicians. You'd have time every week, maybe every day, to do more of what you love. You wonder what your home life could look like, what your vacations could look like, what your relationships could look like if you had more to give, more to receive.

For many therapists, these dreams remain beyond the horizon of their mental energy. They exhaust themselves trying to gain steady streams of referrals. Out of desperation they contract with insurance companies or stay too long in a percentage-based group, then feel resentful later when they see their paycheck. They get trapped in overworking themselves, hoping to compete with other clinicians on social media and Google Ads.

What's even worse, most therapists' efforts at marketing are unseen due to the neon visibility of large group practices and therapy tech companies. These large companies gobble up the vast majority of referrals. They have professional marketing teams who know the strategies to out-perform solo therapists in Google. It's not right that you have to exhaust yourself to compete. You went to school to learn to care for others and help them achieve a healthy life. You deserve to have the tools you need to achieve the practice and life you want.

# WELCOME



I remember starting out, spending 90 hours just trying to build my own website. I remember not knowing if anything I was doing would really give me traction. I was throwing paint against the wall, constantly, trying to see what would work. I was exhausted and isolated. I reached a point where I realized I needed to prioritize the things that give me joy, and to create a strategy that would help me grow without exhaustion. It was that fire inside that helped me build a practice I feel proud of, and I want to help you do the same.

The strategies in this workbook are a distillation of countless hours coaching therapists just like you. I've helped hundreds of therapists through conferences, video production, and marketing coaching. I've seen therapists re-connect with a passionate part of themselves. I've seen them learn something new about who they are, igniting new energy into their practice. I want the same for you.

## LEARN TO PLAY THE GAME

That's where this workbook comes in. I'm going to take you step-by-step through a 6-week practice overhaul. By the end, you'll have a crystal clear marketing strategy that will grow your practice. In fact, you'll learn to see marketing as a game that you can master and have fun with along the way.

Let's get you that much closer to the life you want .for yourself and your practice.

*Connor McClenahan*

# YOUR NEXT 6 WEEKS

WELCOME TO THE NEXT 6 WEEKS OF YOUR LIFE! This book is made to be read in order. If you skip the first 3 chapters, your marketing might end up more or less... unchanged. We'll take this step by step, and by the end you'll have mastered a whole mindset that will serve you for years.

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# 01

# SUCCESS

Discover where you are headed

# SUCCESS

## BEYOND “6-FIGURES”



When you're building your practice, the most costly mistake you can make is not being clear about what success looks like for you. What happens if you do everything right, but end up building a life you didn't really feel excited about? You'd end up frustrated and exhausted. Here's the most common ways I see therapists miss when setting their goal:

1. They only set a financial goal ("6-figure practice")
2. They only set a client-load goal ("I want a full practice")
3. They only set a status goal ("I want to own a group practice")

These goals are insufficient because they don't really hit on what matters most in your life. For example, what good is it to make 6 figures if you're seeing 50 clients a week? Will that specific 100,000 number (not 99,000?) justify your exhaustion? What good is it to have a "full practice" if you have to see people who aren't a good fit?

Instead, set a vision for your life. This vision should be meaningful to you. It should give you purpose even when it's not "fun". It may not only have to do with your private practice, but with the kind of life you want to make room for. It should make you come alive inside.

So what would your vision look like? Let's take a moment to clarify your vision for your life so you know where you are headed.

# SUCCESS

## 1. PAST

Take a breath, close your eyes, and think about the moments in your life that have been the most meaningful. Times in your life you have felt the most loved, independent, and purposeful. What moments come to mind? Why? Before you write, take a moment to really feel these moments. Allow yourself marinate here long enough to sense what it is about these memories that speak to you. Then write a few words in circle 1.

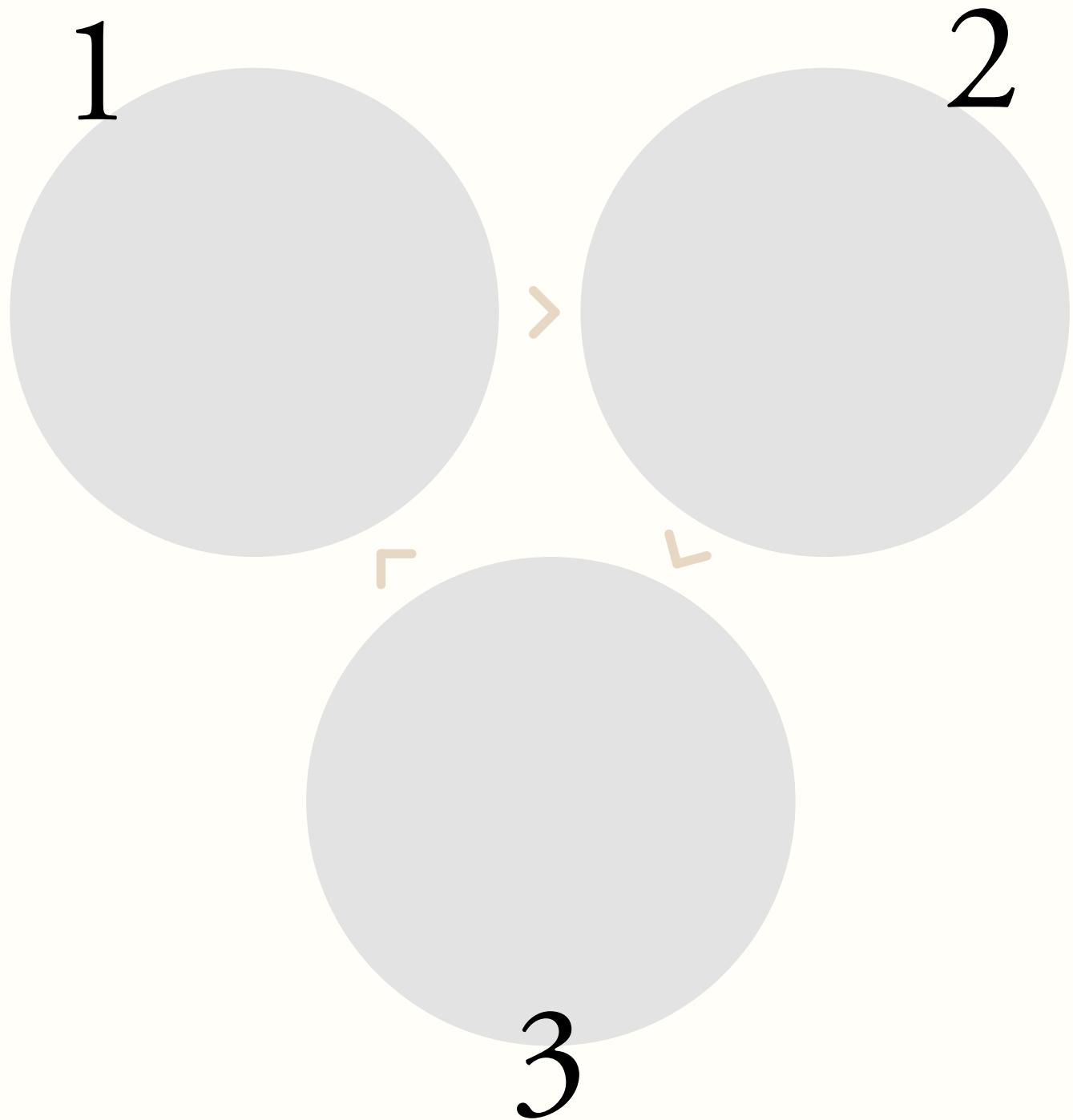
## 2. PRESENT

Think about your current week. What parts of your day, today, do you most treasure? What parts of your days off do you most look forward to? These are the things we want to amplify when we think about where you'd like to be in your vision for your life. Write a few words in circle 2.

## 3. FUTURE

Imagine it's 20 years from now, and you've accomplished everything you wanted to accomplish. A cherished friend or family member is reflecting with you about your life. As you reflect, what do you find yourself most proud of? Take your time, close your eyes. When you're ready, write a few words in circle 3.

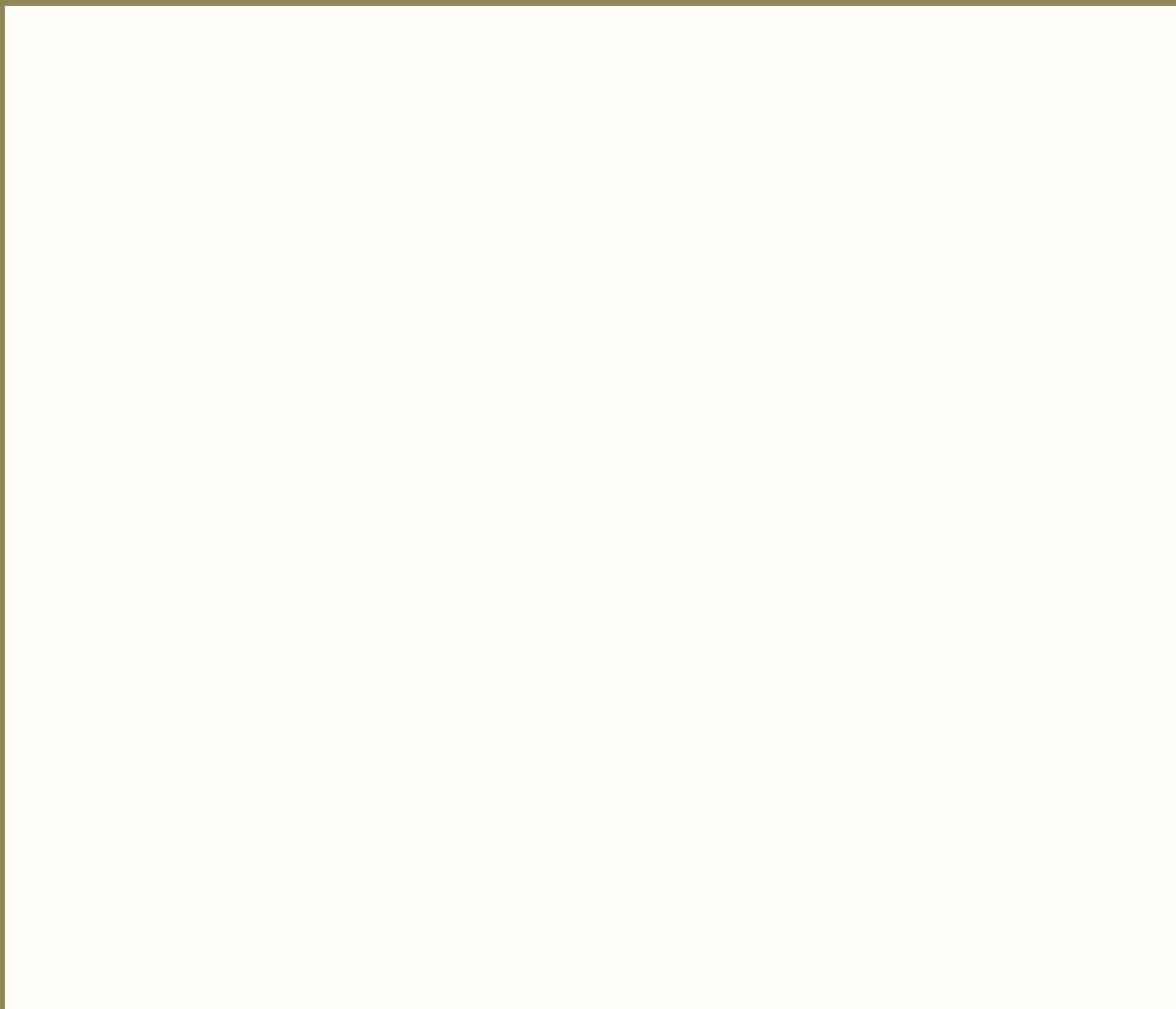
# SUCCESS



# SUCCESS

## WRITE YOUR VISION

Holding these 3 circles in mind, representing the most meaningful parts of your life, write out your vision for what you want your weekly life to look like. Who would you be meeting with? What kind of work would you be doing and when? What would you do with your off-work time? Allow yourself to have fun with this.

A large, empty white rectangular box occupies the lower half of the page, intended for the user to write their vision statement.

# 02

# THE GAME

Set aside 6 weeks of play

# THE GAME

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## EMPLOY YOURSELF FOR 6 WEEKS



Before we talk about **WHAT** to work on, let's define **HOW** we're going to work. Making a real change in your practice isn't going to happen by overworking yourself, and it's not going to happen by procrastinating. Here's what we're going to do:

### EMPLOY YOURSELF AS YOUR OWN MARKETING MANAGER FOR 12 HOURS A WEEK FOR THE NEXT 6 WEEKS.

That's the time it will take to sustainably create your new strategy. You'll have to say no to some things. You may have to talk with your partner or family to help you shift your time around. But let's keep this in mind: by the end of that 6 weeks, you'll have a new marketing system that will help you build the practice - and life - you want.

Here's how you'll employ yourself

6 hours a week will be set aside to do something you love. Maybe it's running, maybe it's pottery, maybe it's taking your kids to the park. You'll know it's the right thing if you get excited about making time for it. It shouldn't have any extrinsic purpose. It shouldn't be "working" at something at all.

6  
HOURS  
PASSIVE PROCESSING

The real purpose for this first 6 hours per week is twofold: to create a reward system that helps stoke your energy, and to create some space to passively process your creative work. Creativity happens when our minds can wander. It's oxygen for the work ahead. Without scheduling those extra 6 hours of "play" every week, it'll be like trying to swim a mile without coming up for air.

# THE GAME

6  
HOURS  
PRACTICE BUILDING



The second 6 hours per week will be in a dedicated space at a consistent time. You'll break up the 6 hours into two 3-hour segments.. You'll spend this time writing your copy, writing your blogs, filming videos, and creating email sequences. All the work you do needs to fit in no more than 6 hours per week.

Below, shade in your 2 3-hour blocks of passive processing (play time), and 2 3-hour blocks of practice building. This will be your schedule for the next 6 weeks.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
8-9:30							
9:30-11							
11-12:30							
12:30-2							
2-3:30							
3:30-5							
5-6:30							
6:30-8							

Now to solidify this journey ahead, talk with someone and tell them what you're planning to do, what kind of time it will take, the fears you have, and what you hope for at the end.

At the end of these 6 weeks you'll be proud of what you've built! Schedule a treat for yourself at the end of the hard work.



# THE GAME

## WINNING THE MARKETING GAME



Now that you have the time set aside, it's time to start playing the marketing game.

I can still feel the excitement when I picture unboxing Settlers of Catan - a popular resource building game. As the board is set, my friends and I take turns placing our first settlements on carefully-chosen resource squares. We start talking, strategizing, and mapping out paths of conquest and collaboration.

When we think of marketing, we don't often carry that same playfulness. We think of numbers, we think of the fear of exposing ourselves, we think of having a whole other "hat" we wear.

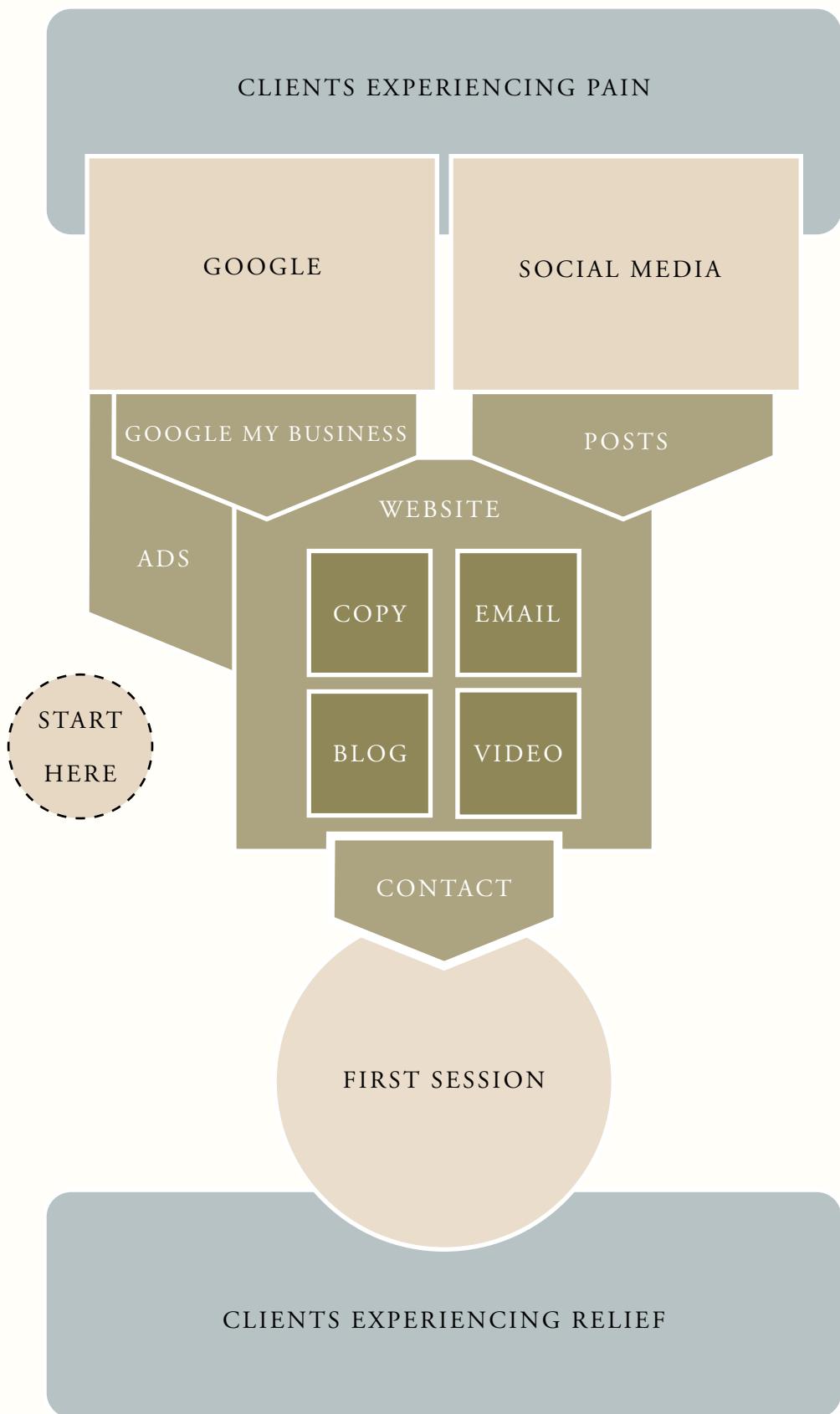
### READY TO HEAR THE GAME?

The marketing game has one object: people are trying to get to the right therapist to help them grow. There are 7 squares you get to move in strategic and creative ways to make that connection happen. The more people you connect to the help they need, the more money you make.

Simple, right?

By the way, it's a board game. Let's take a look at the board.

# THE GAME



# THE GAME

## THE BOARD

Your goal is to get as many clients as you can from the top square (pain) to the bottom square (relief). You'll creatively use Google, Social Media, your website, and the first session to form the bridge these clients will travel. Here's how each square works.

### GOOGLE

Clients in Google are actively searching for help. They're looking for a solution to their daily problem.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Clients on social media generally aren't searching for help. They're looking for something engaging and interesting.

### WEBSITE

The waystation that helps people commit to taking a step forward in their journey.

### CONTACT

A clear button/form, repeated throughout your website, invites the client to initiate a journey with a therapist. Also called Call to Action (CTA).

### FIRST SESSION

This is the start of their journey toward healing. This is also part of the marketing game.

### START HERE

You, the marketer, start here. You can move and build the green squares to help clients schedule their first session.

# THE GAME

## THE 7 SQUARES

### COPY

The more clearly you can empathize with the journey of a specific client, the more they will see you as the right person to help.

### BLOG

Every time a blog is posted, you create another opening for clients to find you through Google search.

### VIDEO

Video content helps clients build a connection with you. It also helps them stay longer to make a decision.

### EMAIL

Email sequences help clients keep coming back to your website to consider a decision to start therapy.

### GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

GMB increases your visibility on Google search.

### SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Social Media posts, like email, help clients consider their decision to start therapy over a long period of time.

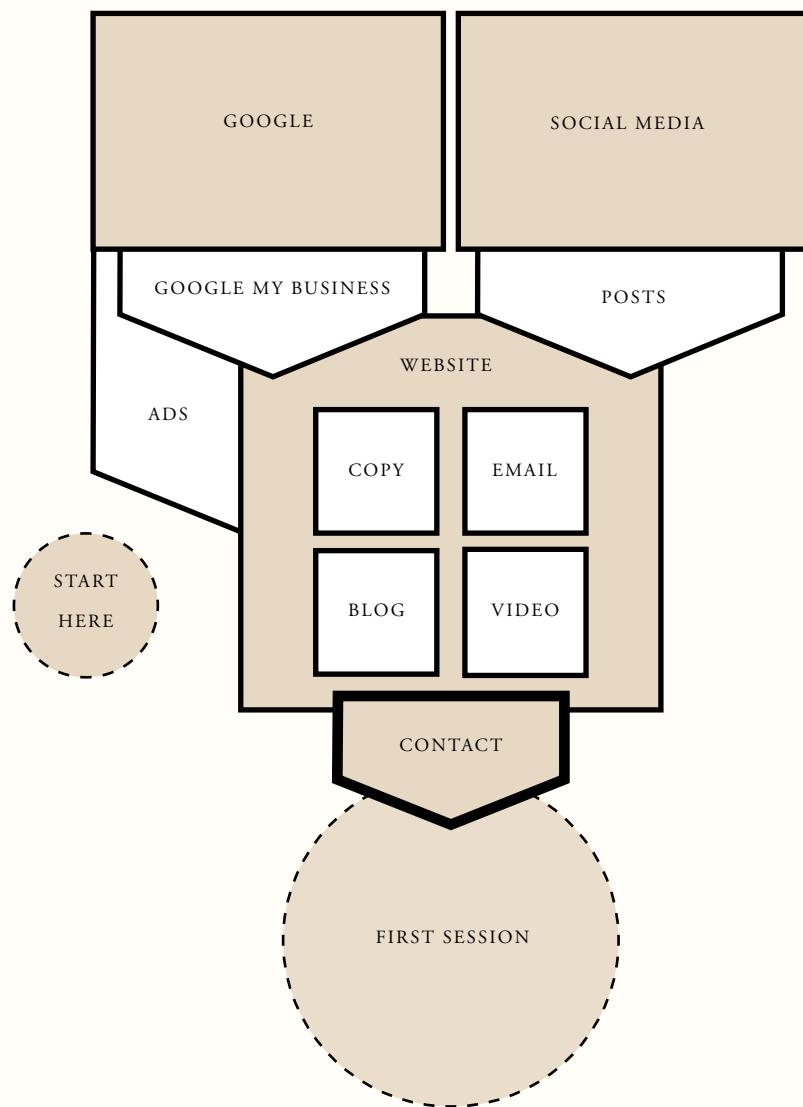
### ADS

Ads are an expensive additional way to increase your visibility on Google search.

# THE GAME

## HOW IS YOUR BOARD SET UP?

Color in each of the 7 squares. The more confident you feel about a square, the darker you can color it in. The less confident you feel, the lighter that square should be. This will give you a good starting point to visualize what areas you'll want to be most creative about. How does your current board look to you?



# THE GAME

## THE GAME BOARD IS SET - NOW DREAM A LITTLE



Now all the pieces are placed, and you have a starting point for the game. As you look at your board I want you to dream a little. Dream about what would happen if you focused on your copy, or if you created a good email list from visitors to your website. What small change could you make to the board to connect more people to that first session with you?

That's what we're going to explore in the next few chapters. Get ready to think creatively and strategically about your marketing game.

Yet there's a pitfall you'll be tempted by that will derail any marketing effort. It'll exhaust you and make it feel like work again, rather than play. This pitfall is your anxiety about filling your practice.

### ANXIETY WILL TURN THE MARKETING GAME BACK INTO WORK

And if you're going to feel energized, playful, and actually grow a strong marketing system, you'll need something stronger than anxiety: empathy. You'll need to create a strong visualization of an actual client.

# 03

# YOUR CLIENT

Clarify who you'll help

# YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

## IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO YOUR MESSAGE WILL BE VAGUE

Even worse, all your content will take at least twice the time and will be scattered. You want all the pieces of your digital marketing strategy to work together in a focused way.

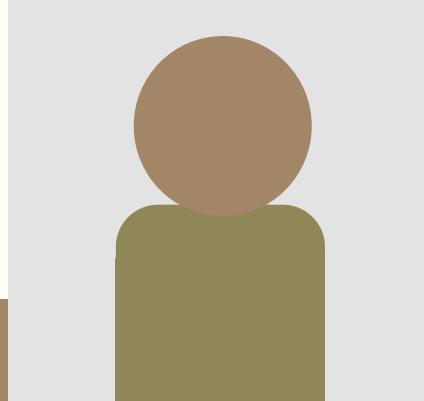
The strength of your digital marketing will depend on how clearly you can visualize your ideal client. Without it, all your videos and copy will unconsciously drive people away.

So we're going to start by choosing ONE client. One actual client that you currently have. We're going to build your entire digital marketing strategy around this one person as if you've built it just to help them start therapy.

### PICK YOUR FAVORITE CLIENT

Think of your current client caseload: which client is your favorite? It might be someone whose life you know you've changed, someone who when you think of them you feel grateful for the work you've done. Someone you feel proud of. Your work with them makes you feel you are the best clinician you can be. Who comes to mind?

\*feel free to use a pseudonym



### MY FAVORITE CLIENT

# YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

01

Describe how they look and act in session with you. How would you describe this person to a friend?

02

Imagine your client is sitting for coffee with their best friend, talking about where they are in life. How would they describe what they really want for their life? What do they long for?

03

Again in the coffee shop, how would your client describe what is keeping them from the thing they want most? What's getting in the way?

# YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

## MEDITATE

Now spend 10 minutes meditating on the person you see before you. Close your eyes and imagine you are in a room with this person. Listen to them, observe them as they sit before you. Set your timer for 10 minutes before you move forward on this worksheet.

EVERY TIME YOU GET  
STUCK, COME BACK TO THIS  
VISUALIZATION OF YOUR CLIENT

If you're ever feeling cloudy or stuck, this space right here inside of you - holding your client in you mind - is the key. This empathetic stance is the opposite of the anxiety that keeps you tongue-tied and scattered. The deeper your empathy for this one person, and the more directly you can speak to this person, the better your content will be.

# 04

# COPYWRITING

Choosing the right words

# COPYWRITING

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## THE RIGHT WORDS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

6

HOURS  
CREATE COPY

Good copy draws the reader in, communicates value, and positions you as an authority who can help others. Good copy is the difference between someone swiping past your webpage and pausing to learn more. It can make the difference between a struggling and thriving practice.

When we talk about copy, we're mainly going to be focusing on the words you use for your profile and specialty pages. This is where people slow down to learn about who you are and what you offer.

When people are looking for therapy, they aren't really focused on you. They're not looking for your credentials, or even trying to "get into therapy". They're looking to solve a problem. They're wondering if you're the right person who can help them grow and heal.

THEY DON'T REALLY WANT THERAPY. THEY  
WANT A HOPEFUL VISION OF THEIR LIFE  
YOU CAN HELP THEM ACHEIVE

The best way to write good copy is to harness the most powerful tool you have as a clinician: empathy. We're going to take you step-by-step toward good copy that connects you to potential clients online.

Good copy simply communicates 2 things to the reader:

1. You understand their pain
2. You can help

Yet as simple as that sounds, most of us get it wrong. Here's how.

# COPYWRITING

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## 2 PITFALLS THAT RUIN GOOD COPY



**Writing with other therapists over your shoulder.** If you pay attention as you're writing, you can sometimes hear a critical voice inside: "That's not the right way to talk about anxiety. You don't know what you're talking about". This anxiety - that your therapist friends will read and criticise your copy - will make you rigid and cautious. If this is the case, focus again on your ideal client visualization. Imagine you're speaking directly to your client.



**Writing because of a low caseload.** While yes, we should revise our copy if we're not getting referrals, there's a step we need to take first. We need to shift gears out of your own anxiety about clients and toward the anxiety your client holds as they're trying to find a therapist. If we don't, we'll end up using vague, catch-all language that's more aimed at "getting a client" than empathizing with the client's pain. As you'll see on the next page, this pitfall can ruin your empathetic voice and distance you from the client. When you feel low-caseload anxiety, revisit your visualization to posture toward empathy.

# COPYWRITING

## WHAT NOT TO DO



I took a stab at writing anxiety-ridden copy. Right away you might notice some glaring issues: it's vague and generalized, it uses way too much jargon, and isn't very empathetic. Let's notice (1) how this copy makes you feel, and (2) what pitfalls are getting in the way.

If you're talking directly to your client, you wouldn't start by listing all your specialties. Casting a "wide net" is a common mistake that makes your copy more about meeting **YOUR** need to get clients, rather than your client's need to get help. It translates to "please, anyone, come be my client!"

Are you feeling stuck? I specialize in depression, anxiety, trauma, and relationship issues. These emotionally **disregulative experiences** are often the result of self-object failures in early childhood.

Starting your copy with a question, and with vague language hints at the anxiety you have at getting clients. Hold the picture of your client in your mind - talk directly to them. Assume you know they are feeling stuck. What do you want to say to them? This first line is your chance to capture their pain and their desire.

I offer a warm, non-judgemental, relational environment where you can grow. I use the relational here-and-now as well as psychodynamic conceptualization to help you form new emotional patterns in your life.

If you find yourself using clinical jargon (even tempting words like "relational" or "safe space") it might mean you're feeling like an imposter. Remember - your client doesn't care so much about you, or even therapy. They care about resolving their pain and are simply wanting to know you can understand and be helpful.

Phrases like "I am passionate" have more to do with your desire to be seen. Instead of telling, demonstrate your passion by your empathy for their journey.

I am passionate about helping people just like you get **unstuck and reconnected** with life!

Again, vague. Using wide phrases like "vague" or "reconnected" shows more concern with getting more clients than a concern for connecting with the specific pain and desire of your clients.

I offer free initial consultations to help us see if we are a good fit. So **if** you're ready to make a change in your life, reach out today.

Try not using "if" in your copy. Stand with 2 feet in your client's world and invite them, definitively, to take the next step.

# COPYWRITING

## VISUALIZE YOUR CLEINT

So I gave it another go. I thought of a specific client of mine and imagined saying this directly to her. It was hard - not to write the words, but to keep myself focused on what she might need to hear to take the next step. Is it perfect? No copy is, but this does a better job of empathizing with the reader. Read along, and on the next page we'll look at how to structure your copy.

Notice how we start with your ideal client's pain and desire. This empathetic approach helps you get on the same page with your client. It helps them see that you understand and care about their journey, not just about "getting clients".

You wish the panic attacks could just go away. The constant pain in your chest - and the fear of having another attack - can make every day harder. You wonder why this is happening and how you can ever feel like yourself again.

Notice I'm not using jargon to impress anyone, I'm using everyday language to describe their pain. When you visualize your client clearly, rather than your own anxiety about growing your practice, your copy should include phrases like this.

Notice how I introduced myself in terms of my helpfulness on their journey. I didn't say "I'm a licensed psychologist who specializes....". I positioned myself as a helpful partner on their journey.

I help people just like you reduce panic attacks. I can help you learn to control your anxiety before you have an attack and create a plan with you for managing attacks so you can find relief.

It's important to give your client a picture of what therapy looks like. Give them some stepping stones so they can see the way down the path you're inviting them on. process?

Let's help you enjoy your social life again without being kept-back by fears of another attack. The first step is to schedule a call with me. We'll talk about how therapy can help you achieve your goals.

Schedule a call today.

Right here I'm aligning with their vision of the life they want. This helps them to see that therapy isn't the "finish line", it's a vehicle that will move them toward the life they want.

If you are visualizing your client's pain, the invitation toward healing should sound direct and clear. If we're anxious about our own needs we tend to be more cloudy and indirect.

# COPYWRITING

## 01. DESIRE AND OBSTACLE

Start with their pain and their longing. What do they most want? What daily obstacles do they keep encountering? Try to use everyday words.

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## 02. I CAN HELP, HERE'S THE PLAN

Tell them what you offer. Try the formula "I help [type of person] with [condition] to [their goal]". Next, tell them what they can expect therapy to be like.

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## 03. HOPE AND INVITATION

Communicate your desire to see them succeed. Give them hope that it's possible. Then tell them what they need to do to contact you.

---

05

## BLOG WRITING

Get noticed by your client... and Google

# BLOG WRITING

## YOUR BLOG IS THE FIRST STEP

12  
HOURS  
CREATE 3 BLOGS

Every blog article is an open door for clients to connect with you. Remember our board game? If we're trying to get as many people as we can to connect with a first session, blog writing opens up the mouth of that system like a whale. The more consistently and accurately you write your blog articles, the better Google can put those articles in front of people looking for your help.

## THERE'S A SECRET, STRATEGIC REASON TO BLOG AS WELL

Every blog is a hot cauldron for all your other content. From this cauldron you'll be able to create many social media posts, videos, and Google My Business updates.

We'll go over how to use a blog in the best way to fuel your entire marketing game. We'll teach you how to

1. Avoid pitfalls
2. Developing a topic
3. Structure your article for your ideal client
4. Use keywords for SEO

# BLOG WRITING

## 2 PITFALLS THAT RUIN GOOD BLOGS

---



**Writing about therapy.** Try not to write about therapy. When people look for a therapist, they're mostly uninterested in "going to therapy", but very interested in getting help with a daily problem they struggle with. When you write about therapy (e.g., "How to find a therapist" or "How therapy helps panic attacks") you might unconsciously express anxiety about filling your caseload. If we focus instead on helping with a daily problem, we position ourselves as a partner in their journey toward the good life they imagine for themselves (e.g. "3 things you can do today to help reduce panic attacks").

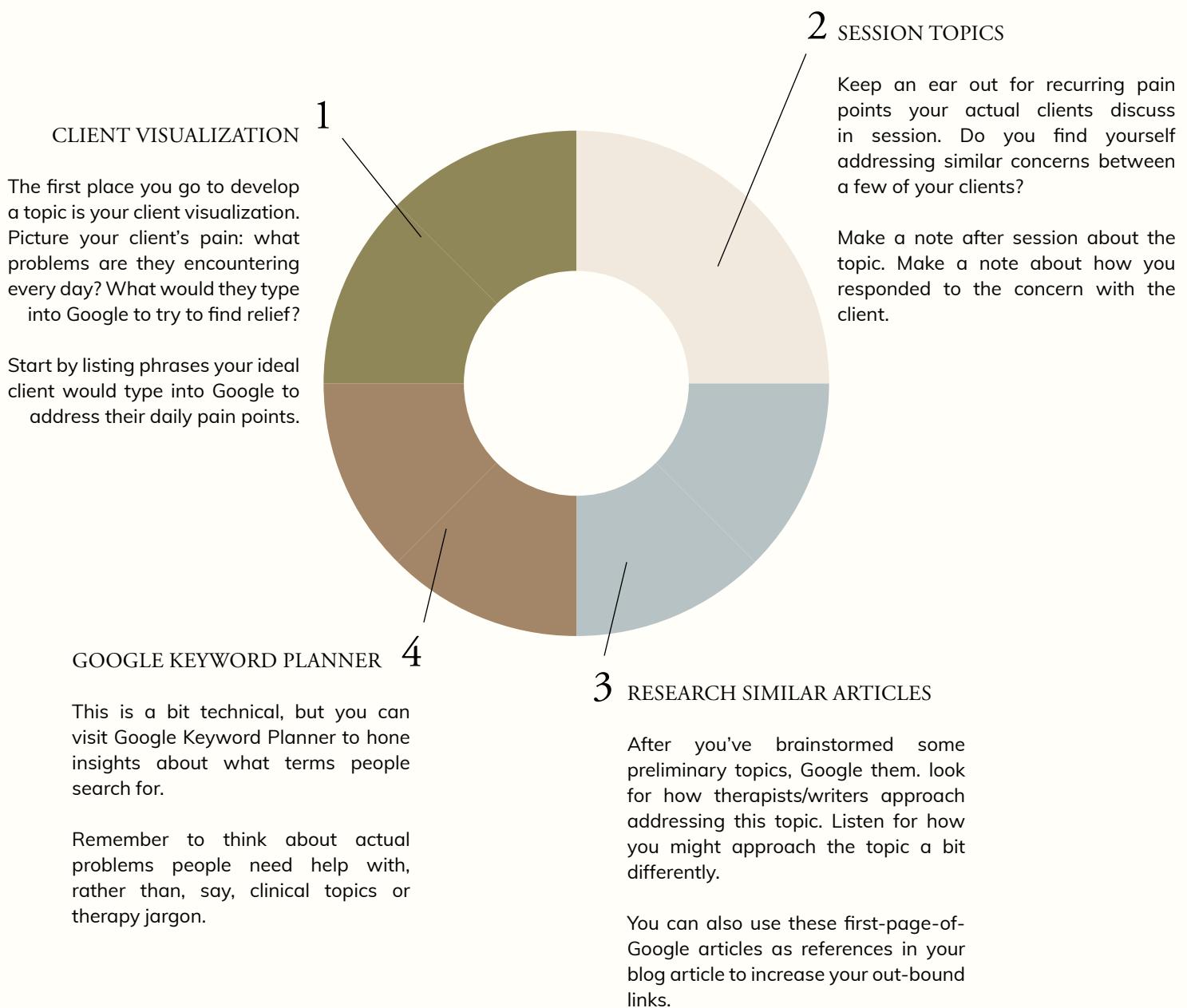


**Writing without Google in mind.** When therapists don't understand how Google search optimization works, even their most thoughtful blogs will go unnoticed. Some of our best performing blogs almost out-rank our homepage in daily search traffic. That's because we understand the marketing game when it comes to Google. We use search terms, headings, and images to help Google know how to rank our page for the terms people search.

# BLOG WRITING

## DEVELOPING A TOPIC

Choosing the right blog topic is essential. In fact, it should be 50% of the entire work of creating the blog. Spend time making sure the topic you're going to choose is exciting and engaging to you. Blogs need to be focused on the pain points your ideal client experiences daily. Below are 4 voices you can use creatively to construct a specific blog topic.



# BLOG WRITING

## PLAN YOUR NEXT 3 BLOG ARTICLES

Let's batch plan your next 3 blogs. Considering the previous page, list 5 blog topics that speak to your ideal client's daily pain points. Again, each of these should be aimed toward a single client.

BLOG TITLE:

How will this blog help its readers?:

BLOG TITLE:

How will this blog help its readers?:

BLOG TITLE:

How will this blog help its readers?:

# BLOG WRITING

## OUTLINING YOUR BLOG

This structure will help you stay focused on helping your ideal client, and also will help you be playful and creative.

¶ 1

EMPATHIZE

"DOES ANYONE UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM I'M FACING?" This is the unconscious question your reader asks when they open your blog. Show them that you "get it":

- describe the problem they're facing
- describe what they wish for / want in their life

Where you can, use external language ("You can't seem to find the energy to get out of bed") instead of feeling words ("You can feel so depressed").

THINK OF YOURSELF LIKE A BIG BROTHER OR SISTER who can let them know you can help. Be encouraging, hopeful . Tell them what this blog will do for them *today*. It might sound like "But there's something we get wrong when we think about sleep hygiene. Let's walk through a few misconceptions, so you can adjust some things and get the rest you need tonight."

¶ 2

PARTNER

3-5  
TIPS

SHARE 3-5 HELPFUL TIPS THEY CAN USE TODAY. Tips might be helpful strategies, misconceptions about a certain condition, pitfalls, or steps toward some goal. People will mostly scan your blog, so make it visually unbusied and light. Some guidelines:

- Keep paragraphs short
- Use lists whenever possible (notice this page you're reading!)
- Use headings and subheadings liberally

# BLOG WRITING

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ENCOURAGE

THEY NEED TO KNOW THAT A GOOD LIFE IS POSSIBLE. If we don't clearly communicate hope, they may not really bite into the advice you've given them. They need to feel that you can see another path for them. They're unconsciously asking "what's the big deal? Why does all this matter?" Communicate

- What would their life look like if they made this shift
- What's at stake, or why this is so important to them

18

INVITE

GIVE THEM A NEXT STEP. This is called a "Call to Action" or CTA. You need to actually tell them what to do, or else they will wander off. The CTA is the biggest part therapists miss when writing a blog. They end soft, losing a potential lead: "So I hope this helps you. Thanks!". Instead, say something like "I help people just like you. We can help you learn to \_\_\_\_\_. Click below and schedule a free consultation today."

## Easy Reading Checklist



USE LISTS whenever you can. Any time you find yourself listing anything (e.g. "You might struggle with headaches, tension, irritability, and angry outbursts"... that can be a list instead of a sentence). This makes your blog easy to scan and find what they need. It also helps them internally organize your content.



READ YOUR BLOG WITH ONLY HEADINGS. Use H1-H4 (heading tags you can use in your blog platform) to organize your content by heading. You should be able to make sense of the entire blog just by reading the headings. Most people read a blog by (1) scanning headings, THEN (2) they pick a heading that aligns with their interest and read more.



HARNESS BACKLINKS. Find ways to reference other articles on your topic. The more you include other links, the better Google can rank your article.

# BLOG WRITING

## ALTERNATE BLOG OUTLINE

This structure will help you stay focused on helping your ideal client, and also will help you be playful and creative. Create this outline

¶ 1

EMPATHIZE

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- describe the problem they're facing
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¶ 2

PARTNER

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3

WRONGS

HOW THIS TOPIC IS MISCONCEIVED. List 3 ways people have this subject wrong. For example:

- 3 ways ADHD is misunderstood
- 3 reasons "communication issues" isn't what's hurting your relationship
- 3 ways social media is hurting your social life

# BLOG WRITING

17

3 RIGHTS

3 WAYS YOU'RE GOING TO FIX THIS MISCONCEPTION. Now step-by-step, show them a different way to look at this problem. Give them the right information, or an alternative view. How might this impact them to see it this way? What difference would this make in their life?

18

INVITE

GIVE THEM A NEXT STEP. This is called a "Call to Action" or CTA. You need to actually tell them what to do, or else they wander off. The CTA is the biggest part therapists miss when writing a blog. They end soft, losing a potential lead: "So I hope this helps you. Thanks!". Instead, say something like "I help people just like you. We can help you learn to \_\_\_\_\_. Click below and schedule a free consultation today."

## Easy Reading Checklist

- USE LISTS whenever you can. Any time you find yourself listing anything (e.g. "You might struggle with headaches, tension, irritability, and angry outbursts"... that can be a list instead of a sentence). This makes your blog easy to scan and find what they need. It also helps them internally organize your content.
- READ YOUR BLOG WITH ONLY HEADINGS. Use H1-H4 (heading tags you can use in your blog platform) to organize your content by heading. You should be able to make sense of the entire blog just by reading the headings. Most people read a blog by (1) scanning headings, THEN (2) they pick a heading that aligns with their interest and read more.
- HARNESS BACKLINKS. Find ways to reference other articles on your topic. The more you include other links, the better Google can rank your article.

# BLOG WRITING

## PLAYING THE SEO GAME

Remember the board game we're working on? Imagine moving your character marker to the "BLOG" square. As you build each blog optimized for the keywords you want to rank for, you create wider and wider pathways between Google and your website.

If you don't, your blog may be helpful, but no one will read it. Many therapists create well-written, heat-felt, helpful blogs that are never seen by clients. If we're going to win the game, optimizing each blog for Google is key. So what's going on on Google's end? How does Google "rank" your blog for search terms?

### GOOGLE SPIDERS ARE LIBRARIANS, CATEGORIZING YOUR BLOG BY TOPIC

These bots are bits of code designed to scan all webpages, asking the question "what is this webpage about?" If you give them clear information, they'll rank your page higher for those search terms. Let's put on our creative, game-player hat and learn how we can tweak these pieces to craft an optimized blog.

I

#### PICK YOUR SEO TERMS

"Panic attack"  
"Breathing exercises"

EXAMPLE

Pick a key word or phrase for your blog. It should be a word or phrase your client would search for to find your blog.

# BLOG WRITING

MCCLENAHAN

A THERAPIST'S GUIDE

38

II

## PLACE TERM IN YOUR TITLE

Place term early on in your blog title, that way both Google and your client will see that this blog addresses their question/need.

EXAMPLE

Stop Panic Attacks Today: 5 Breathing Exercises You Can Do in 5 Minutes

III

## PEPPER TERMS IN HEADINGS

EXAMPLE

"What is a panic attack?"

"Follow these breathing exercises"

IV

## PLACE TERMS IN IMAGE ALT TEXT

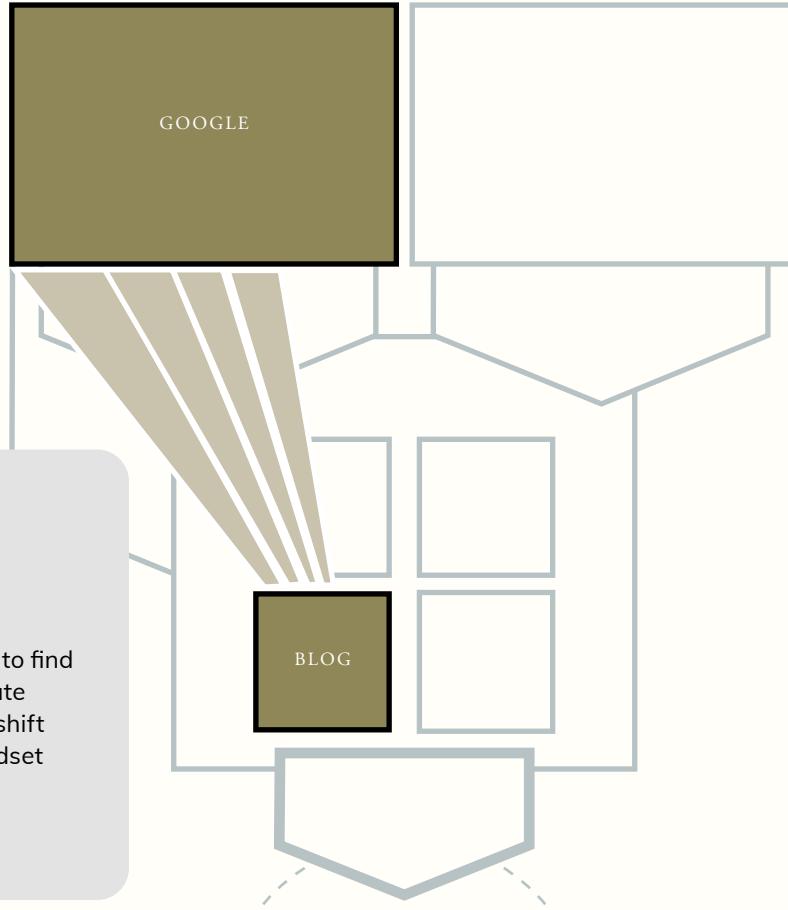
In the "alt text" of each image, write a sentence about the image, using search terms.

EXAMPLE

"Person with a panic attack practicing breathing exercises to calm down"

## A SINGLE BLOG WILL NOT GET YOU A CLIENT

Every time you write a blog, you create wider pathways for clients to find their way to the help they need. Just as a single brick does not create a path, no single blog will get you a client. Remember, we have to shift out of the mindset of "getting clients" and into the empathetic mindset focused on making it easy for your client to get the help they need. Blogging is simply one square in our larger game.



# 06

# VIDEO

Connect with empathy

## INCREASE THE EMPATHY

9

HOURS

CREATE 1-3 VIDEOS

If blogging is about being helpful toward your ideal client's daily struggles, video is about creating an empathetic connection with your client. It's untrue that your therapeutic relationship starts in the first session. Your relationship with your client begins the moment they see your face and begin to judge what it would feel like to talk with you.

That's where video shines. Video - much more than words - gives clients a clear picture of your personality through your non-verbal communication. Your tone, pace, and facial expressions help your client consider what it's like to be seen in therapy.

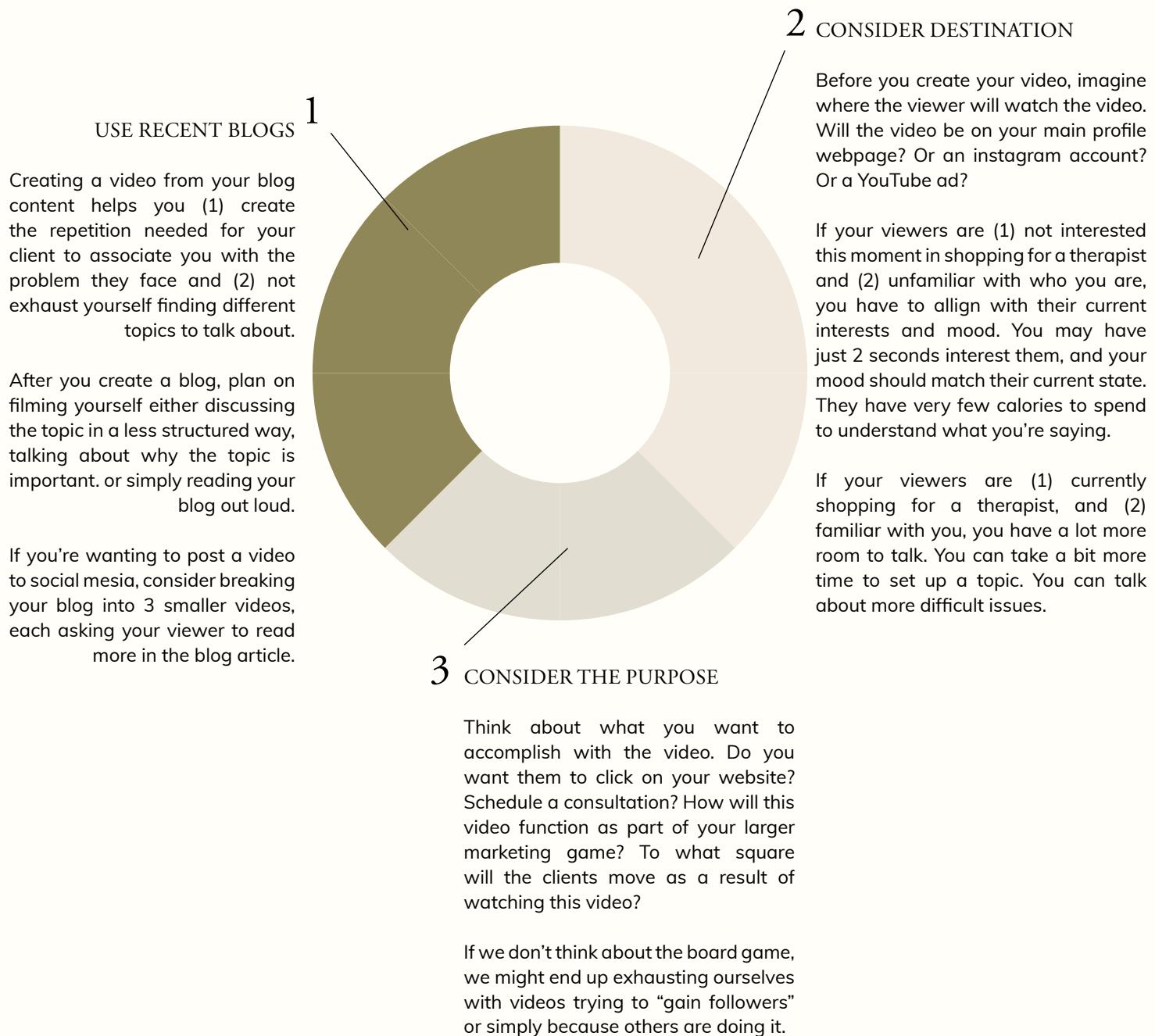
## YOUR VIDEO CAN BE THE MAIN COURSE OF YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

While your blogs and social media posts get them to your profile page, your video helps enrich their understanding of what it would feel like to meet with you. This is the main course of your marketing. Here's what you'll learn:

1. How to generate great video concepts (not scripts)
2. How to film a quality video using minimal equipment
3. How to upload and share for the most impact

# VIDEO

## DEVELOPING A TOPIC



# VIDEO

## VIDEO TALKING POINTS

Instead of a script, you'll create a string of 3-4 talking points that carry yourself and your viewer through your content. Think of it like telephone poles holding up a wire. Ideally, these keypoints are taken directly from a blog article. For a shorter video, you might include 01 and 04. For a longer video you might include all 3-4 points. Write down a sentence and key memorable phrase you can remember during filming.

01

WHAT DOES YOUR CLIENT WANT AND WHAT'S STANDING IN THE WAY?



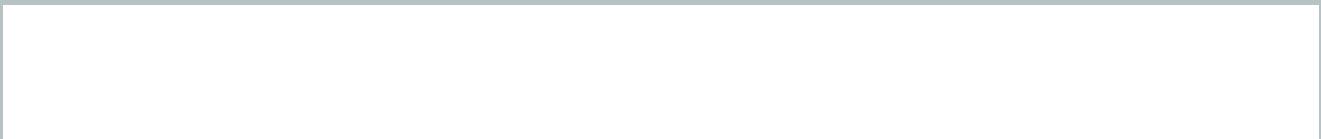
02

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR THEIR DAILY LIFE?



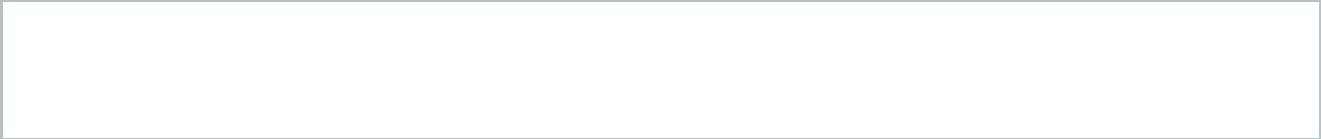
03

WHAT ARE THE STEPS OR PLAN TO GET THEM THERE? (1-3 TIPS)



04

GIVE THEM HOPE AND INVITE THEM TO READ MORE



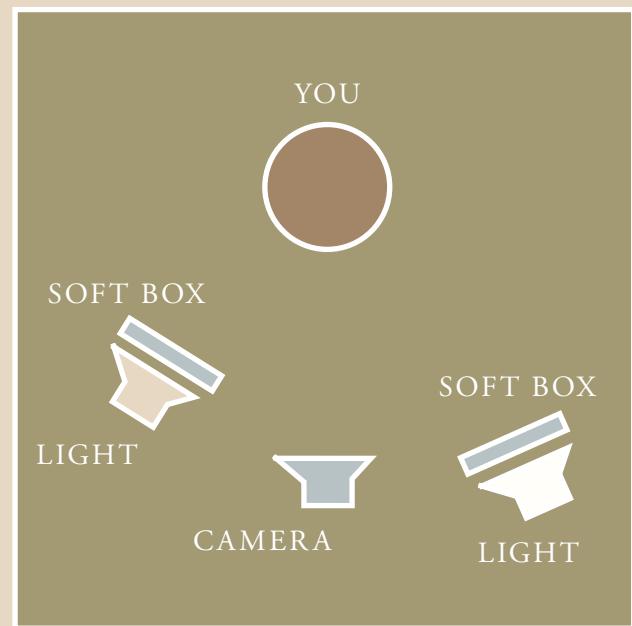
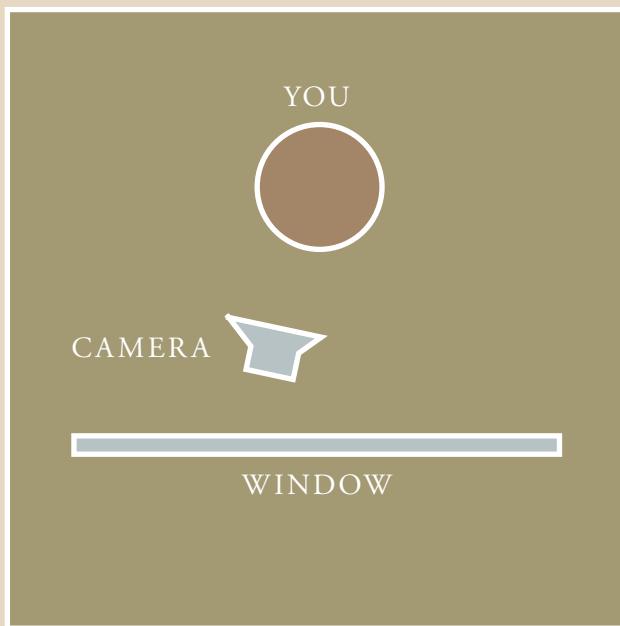
## 2 COMMON FILMING ARRANGEMENTS

### NO LIGHT SETUP

Find a big window that gets plenty of indirect light (light that doesn't cast harsh shadows). Position the camera not quite perpendicular to the window (as shown) to give your face a bit of depth. While doing this, keep in mind how your shot is framed and what will be in the background of your shot while filming. Since the window is stationary, you may have to move furniture, plants, or lamps in the background to achieve good lighting, balance, and color.

### 2 LIGHT SETUP

The additional cost of the lights and soft boxes will afford you the flexibility of choosing where to film, rather than relying on a window. Adjust the lights so one is slightly higher and brighter, and the other is lower and dimmer. The second light is called a "filler" light, and softens the shadows on your face. For both lights, make sure to buy soft boxes. A soft box diffuses the light, like a lamp shade, so you don't look like you're being interrogated in an underground facility.



# VIDEO

## CHECKLIST FOR FILMING

### SOUND

When people rate the quality of a video, they base their judgement more on sound than on picture quality, by far. If you want your videos to be engaging and watchable, make sure you have clear, non-echo-y sound. To achieve this, you can do 2 things: (1) place blankets or foam squares behind the camera to reduce reverberating sound in the room, and (2) buy a lavalier microphone that clips to your shirt. You'll notice your videos are much more easy to listen to.

### CAMERA

You don't need a fancy camera to do quality videos. The quality of your lighting (see previous page), sound, and words will go much farther than a nice camera. So if you're looking to spend money, invest in the other parts first. A great mic and lighting will cost you \$300 total, while a better camera than your iPhone will cost you \$1000. If you're using your smartphone to film, here's a few tips:

1. Use the rear-facing camera. It's much higher quality
2. Orient the camera vertically or horizontally with the destination of your video in mind (social media or YouTube)

### 4 TAKES

Plan on getting your perfect take on the 4th try. I've filmed probably 50 therapists in person, and 4 is the magic number. The first 3 takes will help you gather your words and get used to saying them out loud. Then anything after 4 takes will make your brain turn to mush. You'll lose track of what you're saying and get frustrated. So if you can't get it in 4 takes, your message likely isn't honed yet and needs revision. Take a break and revise your talking points.

### NO SCRIPT

I know you'll start sweating even thinking about this, but you'll do much better with talking points, rather than a scripted/teleprompted video. Every scripted video I've filmed ends up feeling wooden and detached. The therapist ends up caught in their own anxiety, much more neurotic. Instead, develop talking points that help string your video along, and picture, with as much empathy as possible, the face of the client to whom you are speaking. This will evoke a compassionate, warm presence your clients won't forget in the video.

# VIDEO

## READY TO FILM

### CAMERA CHECK:

Make sure the camera is at eye level, there's no glaring light (from a window for example) behind you. Take a test video and check it. Are there odd objects or clutter in the background? Make sure your face is the brightest part of the video. Take time to adjust the frame, light, and colors so you feel confident.

### REHEARSE POINTS:

Instead of memorizing a script, state the key words of your talking points out loud. If you can't remember them, go back to your talking points and revise them until they feel memorable and interesting to you.

## VISUALIZE

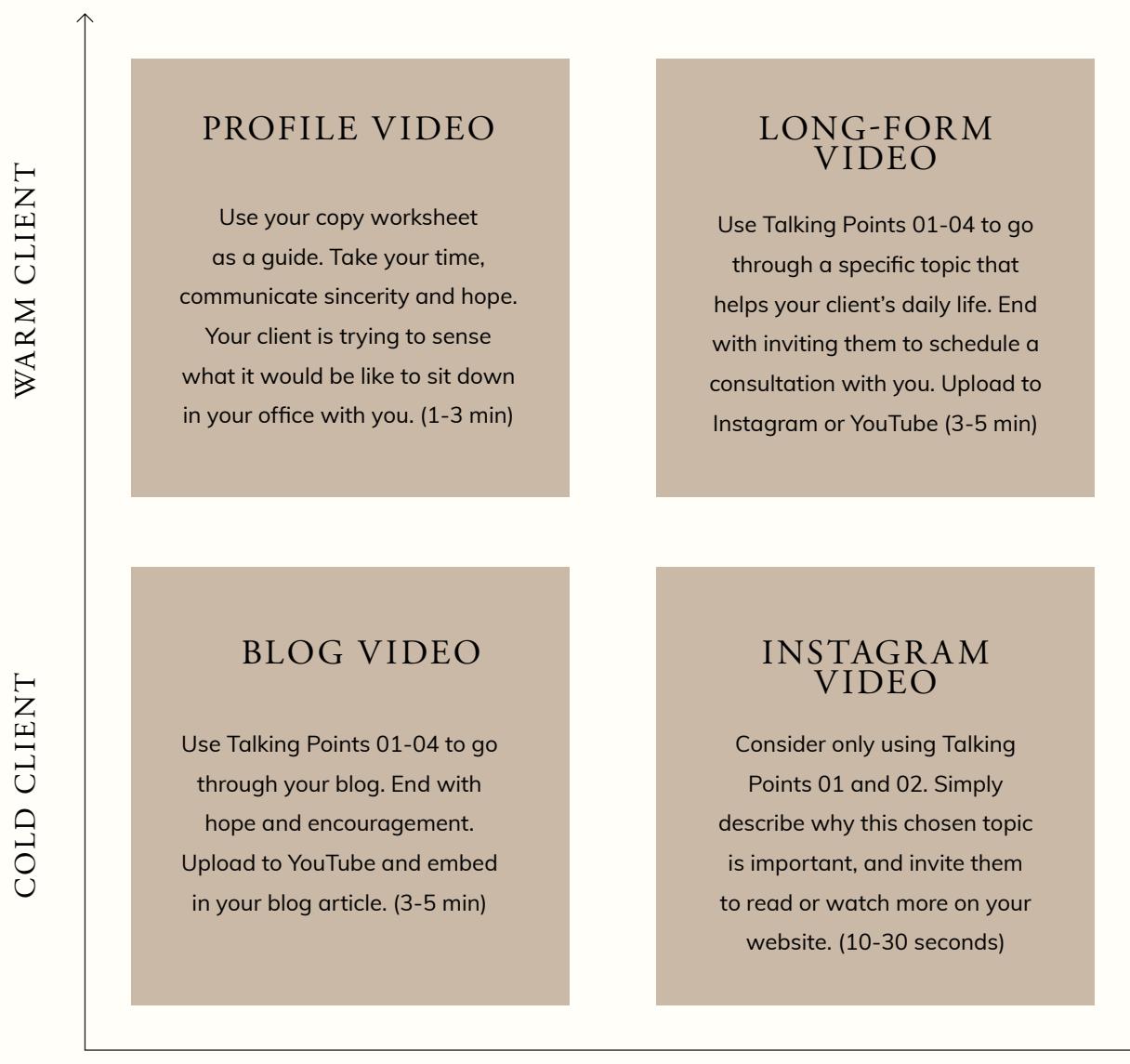
Take a deep breath, close your eyes, remember your favorite client. I like to picture the lens of the camera as a window to my client where I can show up for them. Just like our meditation earlier, allow yourself to picture your client's face. Imagine they see you pop up on YouTube, or Instagram, or on your website: what might they be feeling to see you? Think of the connection and trust you have with them.

Whenever you feel yourself getting nervous, return to the visualization of your client..

# VIDEO

## THINKING STRATEGICALLY

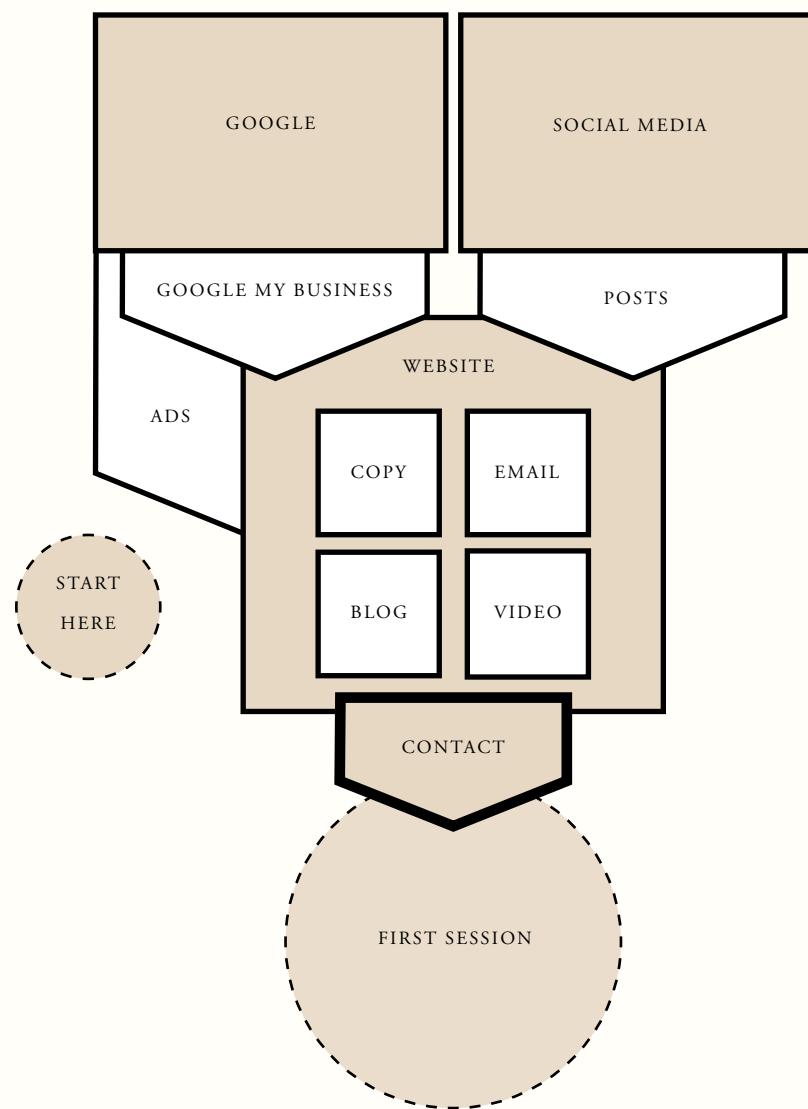
Where you post your video matters. Warm clients are those who are currently in the market for finding a therapist. Cold clients are those who may be interested in solving their mental health problem, but haven't actively searched for a therapist yet. You should use videos in each area to help your clients on their journey toward mental health.



# CHECK-IN

## BEFORE YOU GO FORWARD

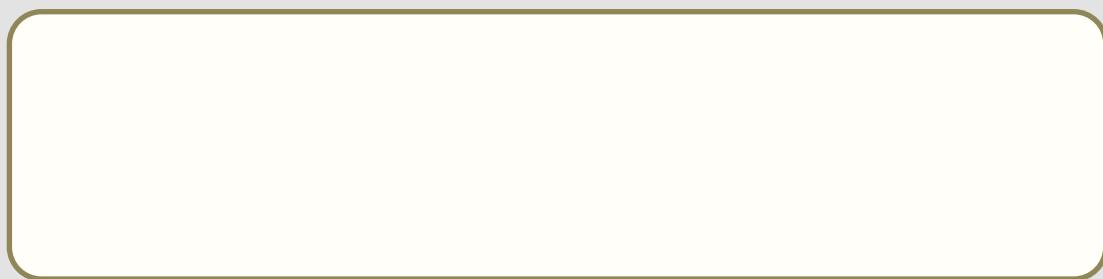
Let's assess how you're doing. We've covered your definition of success, your ideal client, your copy, blogs, and videos. Shade in the areas you've already covered: lighter if you haven't made progress, darker if you feel much better about that area.



# CHECK-IN

## ASSESS

PLAY TIME: Have you been using 6 hours each week to do more of what you love? What change can you make to help you reconnect with energizing parts of you?



WORK TIME: Have you been working too much? Too little? Reflect on your level of burnout today. What support might you need to clear things up and get in the right direction?



PROGRESS: What has been the most important realization you've had so far? If you had 6 more hours this week, what would you be most excited to work on? What parts do you need help with?



07

# EMAIL

Nurture a confident decision

## HELP THEM TEST DRIVE THERAPY

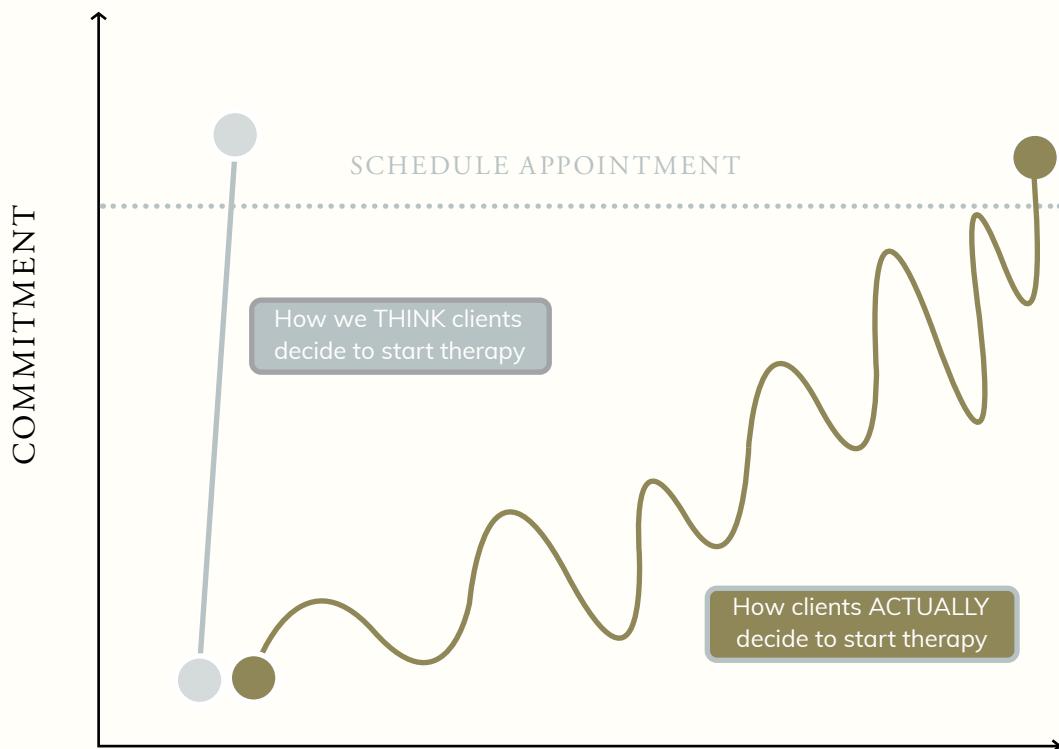
There's an almost ritualistic dance to every purchase decision you make. Think of when you last had to buy a car. You think about it, you search for your dream car online, then you close the tab and move on, then you come back to it. A week later you might drive by the dealership, then tell yourself it's not time yet. Even later, you drive by again and take the car on a test drive. With each step, you're trying on what it would feel like, then stepping back to evaluate and cool off.

We don't make decisions rationally or immediately. We dance back and forth until we feel secure about a decision.

### YOUR CLIENT NEEDS TO TEST, TRY, AND IMAGINE WHAT SEEING YOU WILL FEEL LIKE

Email marketing is all about nurturing this decision process. The vast majority of viewers on your website will simply drive by, and if you don't have a way to reengage with them, they may feel they have to "buy the car" right now or move on. Below is a visual of the path clients take to start therapy.

# EMAIL



As your clients dances back and forth around the decision to start therapy, they experience a mix of hope and hopelessness, anxiety, shame, financial calculations, excitement, and dread.

You want to give your clients many opportunities to consider what it's going to feel like starting therapy with you. Email marketing allows your client to reengage with you as they try on what it's like to be your client.

One powerful way to do that is to give them what's called a "secondary call to action" on your website. This helps them commit to finding out whether you're the right person for them. Here's how you'll do that:

1. Create a valuable lead magnet
2. Create an engaging automated email sequence

# EMAIL

## WHAT IS A LEAD MAGNET?

6

HOURS  
CREATE MAGNET

A lead magnet is a free offering given in exchange for an email address. Every lead (person interested in what you're selling) you generate from the download of the magnet allows you to follow up with that person in their inbox. From the client's perspective, the lead magnet gives them another choice besides "submit a contact form" or "leave the website". It gives them what's called a "secondary call to action" that helps them dip their toes in the water and commit to a process of discernment.

TO START, THINK OF SOMETHING THAT PROVIDES \$50 OF VALUE

### EXAMPLES

- Checklist for managing panic attacks
- Video on 5 essential communication skills for couples
- Quiz to identify communication style
- Daily planner for sleep hygiene

I

### CREATE LEAD MAGNET

It should solve a daily problem your ideal client currently experiences. Pay attention to the design. Is this something you'd want for yourself?

II

### TEST IT

Send it out to a few non-therapist friends. Is this helpful to them? Would they share it with their friends?

III

### PLACE IN EMAIL SEQUENCE

Unless it's a quiz embedded on your site (e.g. TypeForm), your magnet should be given in the first email of your email sequence.

## HOW TO STRUCTURE AN EMAIL SEQUENCE

6

HOURS  
CREATE SEQUENCE

### 1. SET-UP MAILCHIMP

MailChimp and Aweber are similar solutions that offer lead sign-up forms, keep track of your lead emails, and send out both automated campaigns and one-off emails to email lists. You'll need to take some time to familiarize yourself with the platform, but it's well worth it. I use MailChimp, but I know others who prefer Aweber.

### 2. WRITE 2 EMAIL SEQUENCES

You'll write 2 separate email sequences that will interlock in one automated sequence. This way your leads will get an alternation of a "helpful" email concerning the magnet they downloaded, and an "invitation" email talking about your paid services.

### 3. STRUCTURE

Once you've written your emails, you'll design and schedule them in your platform. I suggest spacing emails 2-4 days apart. Each email should have a clear subject line as well as a clear call to action - something you're inviting them to DO. For magnet email sequence, this could be "read chapter 3 of your PDF and practice it today". For therapy email sequence, CTA could be "click here to schedule a consultation today"

# EMAIL

## MAGNET EMAIL SEQUENCE

01

SHOULD BE A CONGRATULATORY EMAIL. PDF OR RESOURCE ATTACHED

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

02

WHY THIS MAGNET IS HELPFUL

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

03

TIP FOR USING MAGNET

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

04

TIP FOR USING MAGNET

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

(REPEAT TIPS EMAILS FOR AS MANY EMAILS AS FEEL HELPFUL)

# EMAIL

## THERAPY EMAIL SEQUENCE

### 01 - DESIRE AND OBSTACLE

WHAT DO THEY MOST WANT AND WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

### 02 - TESTIMONIAL

DO YOU HAVE A REVIEW? SHOW THEM WHAT THEY'LL EXPEREINCE

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

### 03 - PLAN

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THERAPY? HOW DOES THIS HELP THEM?

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

### 04 - OBJECTION

WHAT KEEPS PEOPLE FROM SCHEDULING A CONSULTATION? BE EMPATHETIC

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

### 04 - ENCOURAGE

SUMMARIZE PREVIOUS EMAILS AND GIVE THEM HOPE THAT YOU CAN HELP

SUBJECT:

CALL TO ACTION:

# EMAIL

## CHECKLIST FOR EMAILING

### ZIPPER THE EMAIL SEQUENCES

Create one email automation that has both email sequences staggered in an alternating pattern. You can also create two automated sequences, to both of which the lead is subscribed. This may help if in the future you have more than one lead magnet.

Space emails 2-4 days apart.

### CLEAR CTA BUTTON

Design a clear, bold call to action button with a consistent color. You might even place 2 buttons on the same email. Most people need something repeated 7 times before they consider a certain message. Count on the fact that they'll need to see that same "Schedule a Consultation" button 7 times before they click on it. If you do that well, you'll help them overcome their anxiety and reach out for help.

### STRONG SUBJECT LINE

There's a lot to creating a good subject line. This is where you want to think of marketing like a game. Be creative, think empathetically. Imagine they have 20 new emails, and your email needs to light up a part of their brain with curiosity and relief. Use even the first 1-2 words carefully. The subject "5 ways you may be coping with depression" will play better with the key words first, and with a positive spin, if possible: "Surviving Depression: 5 tips for today"

### REVISE AS YOU GO

No email sequence will be perfect. In fact, you want to count on continuing to revise it as you go. My sons play a game in the park with sand and water. They press a button and watch the water travel through the sand, hoping to dam it up. It's only when the water flows that they get to see, with excitement, where the weak spots are. As you start to get leads receiving your automated sequence, you'll be able to view the open rates and click rates of each email. See where the weak spots are, and get excited about small changes you can make to help your email sequence function best.

# 08

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Using Media Purposefully

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## WHY THERAPISTS ARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

3  
HOURS  
CREATE 3 POSTS

Therapists have taken to Instagram rapidly since the onset of the pandemic in 2020. The rise of dancing videos of TikTok therapists isn't only due to the precipitous increase of digital communication; it's also due, likely, to the tingling sense that traditional means of getting clients are no longer working as they used to. I'm leary that large therapy tech companies like BetterHelp and Theranest, with their infinite ad budgets and marketing departments, are pushing solo practitioners to the back of the line on Google search results. This forces therapists to look elsewhere for visibility.

On its face, social media is actually not a great way to connect with therapy clients. People tend not to shop for a therapist on Instagram. Usually, when we open Instagram, we're looking to check in with friends and to be entertained. Very few "warm customers" are opening Instagram to look for a therapist.

On the other hand, many therapists have found success in building referrals through social media engagement. Their consistency, transparency of video content, and authenticity help them to build trust with people who are hesitant to reach out via conventional means.

Keep this in mind: More than any other marketing effort, we need to be strategic and creative with the game we're playing with social media. Here's why:

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## WHY SHOULD I NOT DO SOCIAL MEDIA?

You have limited amount of time and energy to put toward your marketing efforts. That means making a hard choice of what to prioritize. Thinking again of our board game, let's talk about the reasons you might want to put your energy into another block, rather than social media.

### IT'S NOT LOCATION BOUND

People who follow your content on social media are not necessarily in your area. Your posts advertising therapy services may be seen mostly by people who are out of your state or country.

### FOLLOWERS AREN'T CLIENTS

When you write a blog or revise your copy, there's no immediate feedback that your efforts are giving you traction. That can be hard! It's tempting to put effort into social media simply for the immediate feedback: when you post, you can see immediately how it's tracking. However, followers aren't necessarily clients, and 10k views doesn't correlate with marketing traction.

### YOU NEED A DIGITAL PRODUCT

If you're going to put more energy into social media than you are your copy, blogs, or videos, it should only be because you have a paid digital offering that anyone anywhere can buy (e.g. coaching, digital courses and webinars, or workbooks). You should have a non-location-bound product that makes use of the effort you're putting in to an audience that cannot attend therapy.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

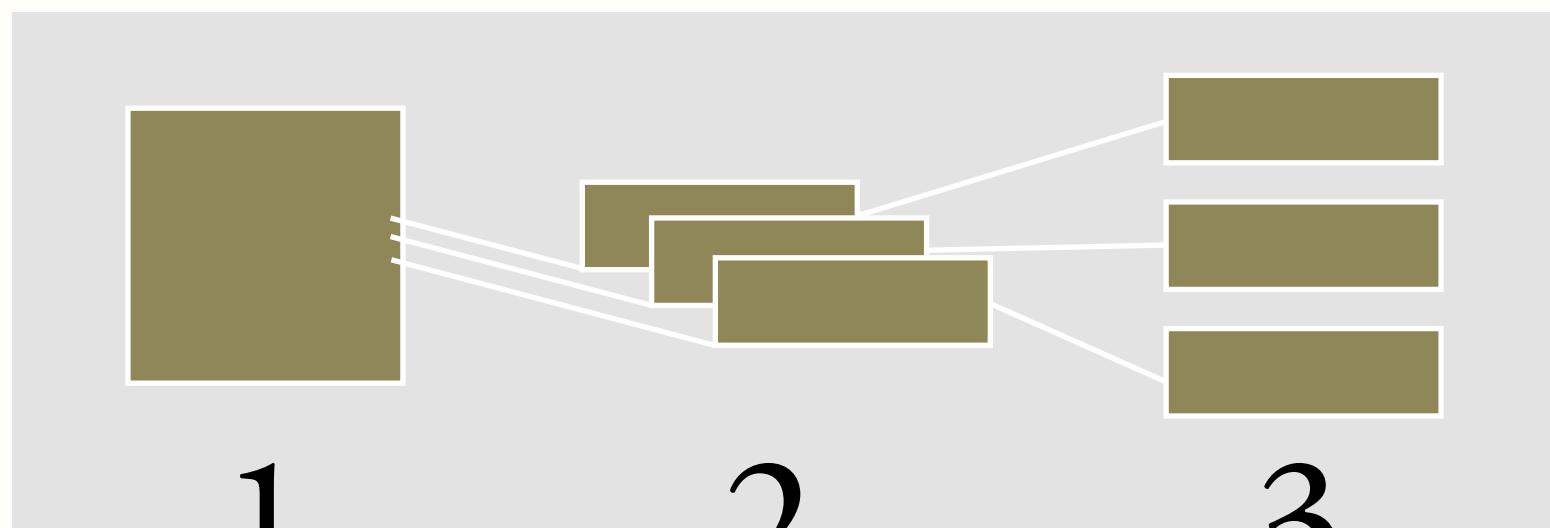
MCCLENAHAN

A THERAPIST'S GUIDE

60

## INSTAGRAM MARKETING TO COLD CUSTOMERS

Unlike Google, Instagram users aren't directly searching for a therapist. They may have a general interest in mental health, boundaries, or self-care, yet they don't visit Instagram to search for their therapist. Instead of trying to "get clients" or even "getting likes/followers", think of content visibility.



1

### WRITE BLOG

Start your social media content search by looking at your current blogs. Recycling content isn't lazy, it's smart. Clients need to hear a single message 7-10 times to hear it clearly. To you it may sound repetitive, but to them it's a way to digest your message.

Read over your blog article and begin to identify 3 areas you could explore in a social media post.

2

### CREATE 3 POSTS

Create 3 social media posts from your existing blog article. Consider the fact your clients are cold - they're not actively looking for a therapist. If you look back at the "Blog" section of this workbook, the easiest sections of your blog to use for a post are:

[Paragraph 1]: Desire and Obstacle

[Paragraph 2]: Partner

[Paragraph 7]: Encourage

3

### SCHEDULE POSTS

Schedule the posts a few days apart on social media. It might be helpful to choose a consistent day you'll post to create a ritual for yourself and your followers.

Consider posting not just on Instagram, but on Google My Business as well.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## GOOGLE MY BUSINESS IS KING

While Instagram and Facebook most frequently come to mind, Google My Business is likely your most untapped potential for growth. Google, after all, is the main player in search rankings, and they prefer for you to use their tools.

Google My Business is your online business listing. It's the listing you see whenever you search Google Maps, and appears in the right-hand column of search results. The more information you feed your listing, the more power you give Google to rank your site for search terms.

### GIVE GOOGLE EVERYTHING THEY ASK FOR

Make sure every slot is filled in in your profile. If they ask for a logo give them a logo. If they ask for availability hours, photos, services, or posts, fill it out. Making Google happy is the best way to increase your search ranking.

### MATCH YOUR ADDRESS AND PHONE

Make sure the address and phone number you give Google are visible on the footer of your website, word for word. As simple as this sounds, you'll be amazed how often businesses miss this. When your address and phone match your business listing, Google feels more confident about promoting your listing.

### REPURPOSE CONTENT, CONSTANTLY

Feed Google My Business fresh information about your services and offerings by creating keyword-rich posts. I suggest repurposing Instagram posts on Google My Business. Google will thank you by increasing your visibility.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## “HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ALL THIS?”

I know I can find myself asking this question sometimes. I see other therapists with massive Instagram followings, or digital courses, or Tiktok videos, and I can easily feel insecure. “Should I be spending more time building that channel?”. It’s a bit like picking a lane in a grid-locked freeway: As soon as you merge into one lane, the other lane can start to pick up.

It’s important to know that we all feel like this. There are likely things you’re getting right that others wish they could do. The image of perfection is a mirage we all chase. Even as you’re working through this workbook, you might be feeling that. You might have a sense that I’ve achieved some perfection. Yet I look out at other therapists, just like you, and wonder how they “do it all”.

### YOU DON’T HAVE TO DO IT ALL. IN FACT, DON’T.

Don’t worry at all about your “followers” or impact. That pursuit is an endless - truly endless - trap. Think instead about your one client. How will you reach them? People are looking, right now, today, for your help. You have a chance to creatively use your beautiful, empathetic voice to encourage them. You have the chance to reach out to them. It doesn’t matter how perfectly or imperfectly.

How will you help them take the first step? Use one channel, use several, it doesn’t matter. What matters is you can help them with their pain... and they don’t know that, yet. Social media is simply one tool you can use to that end.

09

# ADS

How to avoid wasting money

## THE LAST TOOL TO TINKER WITH

0  
HOURS  
DON'T RUN ADS YET

If you don't know how ads work you will end up spending time and money on something that gets you nowhere. And what's worse, you'll not spend that time and energy on marketing that will actually help you grow.

On the surface, paid advertisement sounds enticing. I remember times early on when I'd receive a tempting offer from Facebook:

"Get seen by 2000 people in your area! Boost this post for \$20"

Ad providers want you to think of their paid advertisements in a one-to-one mindset: Pay x amount, get x visibility. That couldn't be farther from the truth. Ads require time and skill to work properly.

In this chapter I'll teach you how paid advertisements work, when you should use ads (if ever) and what you can expect when you decide to start an ad campaign.

# HOW PAID ADS WORK

## SET-UP

First you set up the parameters of an ad. In Google, you give them the content you want in the paid ad, the keywords for which you want your ad displayed, as well as demographic parameters (like location, language, age of user), and you set your budget.

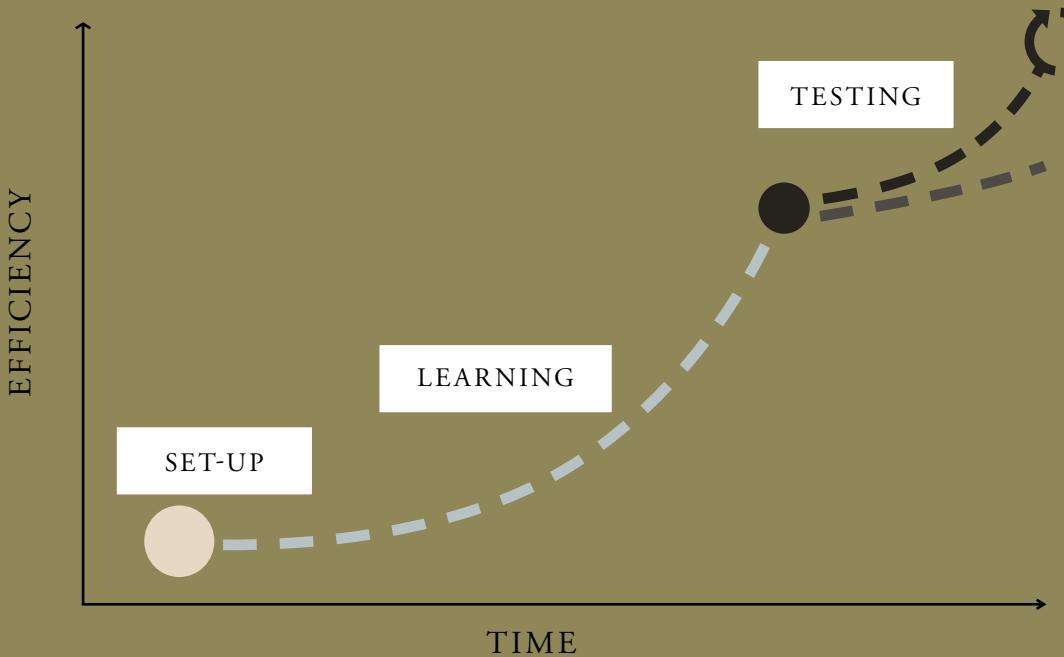
## LEARNING

Google shows your advertisement to lots of people, looking for conversion actions. Out of all the people who click on your ad, who end up scheduling a call? Google analyzes trends in types of people who tend to make a conversion action.

## TESTING

After Google achieves efficiency with your ad campaign, you'll want to do A/B testing. Basically, you want to try changing one variable in your campaign - maybe your copy, your picture, or maybe the location of the client. Then compare that ad to the one you have running to see which is most efficient.

This takes lots and lots of time. Google needs to show your ad to thousands and thousands of people to get enough feedback on which kinds of people will be most efficient to show ads to. Over a period of months, Google gets more efficient at showing ads to people who want your services. Each click on your ad can cost around \$3-5. So to give Google enough information to build a useful campaign, you may have to spend around \$30/day on ads.



## 3 AD PITFALLS

---



**Boosted Posts.** Often Facebook or a similar platform will offer you the ability to “boost” a post - show it to a larger audience - for a flat rate. These tactics don’t work for a few reasons. First of all, the type of person matters. Showing your content to “more people” could be people entirely uninterested in therapy. Second, because there’s no conversion tracking, there’s no way to know if anyone from that ad became a client. How will you know if it worked? Stay away from cheap, time-limited ads.



**Instagram and Facebook Ads.** My preference is to not use Facebook or Instagram ads. Whenever I look for a paid service like a therapist, plumber, or doctor, I never open Facebook or Instagram. I always open Google. This tells me that it’s likely my customer base is looking at Google or Yelp, not Facebook or Instagram, for my services. I’d encourage you to think about where your ideal client is going for your services, rather than starting with what is most familiar or convenient.



**Running Ads Yourself.** Unless you want to take time to learn the intricacies of the complex world of Ads, pay someone to manage your ad account. While it may be a painful financial sting, it’s essential. If you are running poorly constructed ad campaigns, you’ll lose much more than the cost of the ad manager’s fee. You’ll be paying \$30/day for clicks that may be the wrong customer base. What’s worse, you’ll lose out on clients who could pay you much more. If you’re running ads, pay someone.

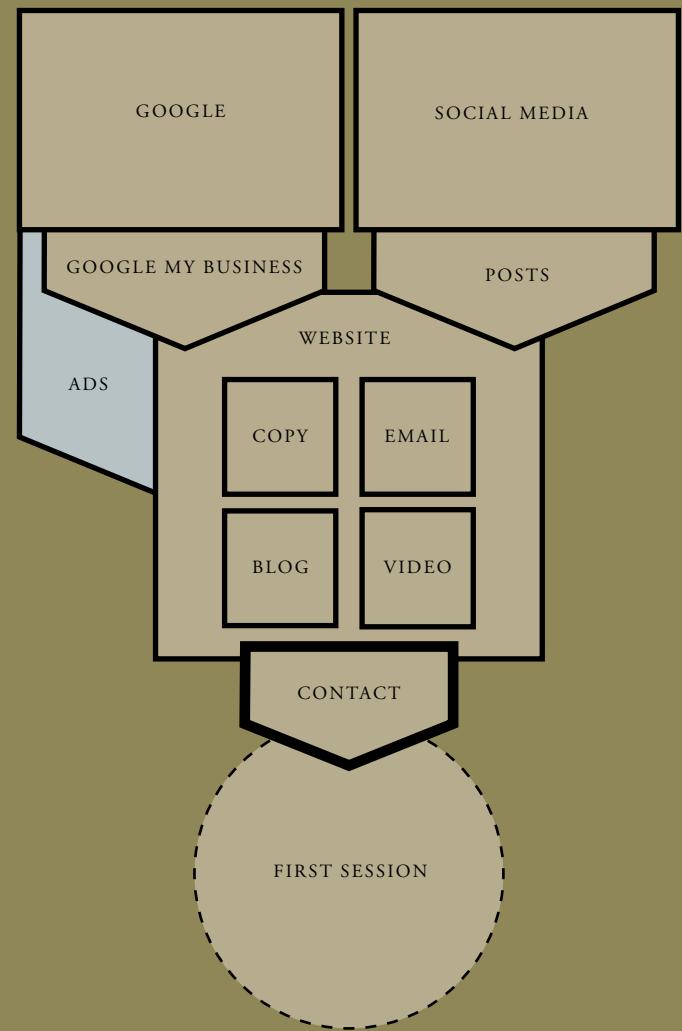
## ADS ARE THE FINAL STEP

**IMAGINE IF** to increase ticket sales, Disneyland paid for buses to drive people to the entrance of the theme park... but it's still under construction.

There's one ride that works, dust everywhere, and bathrooms are closed. No one is buying tickets. They switch to limousines and even pay people to come to the park. But sales don't increase. They spend so much money getting people to Disneyland that they're unable to finish the park itself. The problem is clearly not going away, no matter how many people they bring to the gates. They'll only make money if people can look inside and see functional rides, hear music, and smell popcorn.

Unless the rest of your marketing efforts are humming along, your ads will be a waste of money. You'll be paying to bring clients to a website that may not interest them or speak to their needs, may be unclear, have vague language, no recent blogs or videos to engage them.

If you have a strong marketing game you may never need paid ads. I only started paid ads when I had other clinicians and needed to expand my reach. Even then, I did so in tandem with other marketing efforts. If you have \$30/day to spend on ads, consider these ideas:



### BETTER WAYS TO SPEND \$30/DAY

- HIRE A BLOG EDITOR
- HIRE AN SEO CONSULTANT
- HIRE A SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
- HIRE A VIRTUAL PHONE ASSISTANT

10

# THE FIRST SESSION

Help your client commit to their growth

# THE FIRST SESSION

## YOU'LL NEED TO BE A TRAIL GUIDE

3

HOURS

WRITE WAYPOINTS

Maybe your training was like mine: in the consultation and first session, you want to clarify their symptoms and “build rapport”. Empathize and communicate strong non-verbals, gather relevant symptomatic information. But here's the catch:

Even if we do those jobs well, we'll still miss the client.

So much of what they're signing up for is shrouded in obscurity. They have no idea how this works or what to expect. They often don't know for certain if they really need therapy at all, or if you're the right person to help. They're ambivalent. There's two things they are looking to confirm in the first consultation and session, if they're going to become a client:

1. You are the right person to see them
2. Commitment to the difficult process ahead

So in addition to doing a good Carl Rogers impression, you'll want to also be a trail guide for people who have never been in the wilderness. You need to give them a clear sense of what likely lies ahead.

They know deep down that therapy will lead them to difficult and challenging places. If you don't tell them how hard it will be - or how deeply rewarding it will be - they may turn back as soon as it gets rocky.

Serving as a trail guide in the first session is essential for their trust in you and their commitment to the process. By learning this skill, you'll build a caseload of long-standing clients who are consistently moving toward their goals. On the next two pages you'll see the five “trail guide waypoints” I like to cover over the course of the initial consultation and first session of therapy.

# THE FIRST SESSION

## 01. HOW BAD THEY HURT

One of the first things you want to do in the consultation and first session is to define the pain. You want to reflect back to them how bad they hurt. It usually hurts more than they're able to tell you. Validate how many areas of their life are affected by this problem.

## 02. WHAT THEY REALLY WANT

Sometimes they can tell you what they want, but sometimes they need help naming it. As they express their pain, listen for clues about the vision they have for a better life. Sometimes what they want is simply the opposite of the pain they feel. Reflect this back to them in a clear statement.

## 03. THE DIFFICULTY AHEAD

Be honest with them about how challenging it will be to achieve what they want. A trail guide needs to paint a picture of the strenuous hike. It won't be a walk on a paved park trail; there will be unique challenges to reach the destination. They'll have to confront some things that will feel uncomfortable.

## 04. WHAT IT WILL COST

Tell them what will be required from them in order to help them achieve growth. This is where you talk about finances and therapeutic frame.

## 05. WHAT THEY'LL RECEIVE

This is probably the most important, because it's what gives them hope and relief to hear from you. They need to know that even after hearing the unique pain they experience, you're confident you can get them to where they want to go. Their vision for their life is possible, and it will feel deeply rewarding.

# THE FIRST SESSION

## SAMPLE WAYPOINTS

### 01. HOW BAD THEY HURT

"I can see how anxiety has impacted not only your relationships, but your sleep, your focus, and your self-esteem. You feel like every day is a struggle, and you don't know how to make it stop."

### 02. WHAT THEY REALLY WANT

"I bet you wish you could feel confident again, you could sleep through the night, you could cool yourself down when you're stressed. It sounds like you know how much this could help you feel closer to supportive people around you. Most of all you really want to feel like yourself again"

### 03. THE DIFFICULTY AHEAD

"Part of what will be difficult is that we'll have to face some parts of your experience that might initially make you more anxious. You might learn things about yourself or others that make you feel uncomfortable. We'll find safety together to move toward these feelings so you can learn more about yourself and find solutions to the issues that are bothering you."

### 04. WHAT IT WILL COST

"I think it's possible to help you get to a place where you can feel less anxious. I'd like to meet with you 1x/week for 45 minutes. My fee is \_\_\_\_/session. We'll meet for 6 months and evaluate progress along the way."

### 05. WHAT THEY'LL RECEIVE

"At the end of that time I'm fairly confident that you'll be able to sleep through the night again, and you'll be much more in control of these anxious thoughts. How does that sound?"

# THE FIRST SESSION

## WAYPOINTS FOR YOUR CLIENT

01. HOW BAD THEY HURT

02. WHAT THEY REALLY WANT

03. THE DIFFICULTY AHEAD

04. WHAT IT WILL COST

05. WHAT THEY'LL RECEIVE

# 11

# MASTERY

Learn marketing fluency

## LEARN TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE

I remember learning Spanish when I was 10 years old. My family was staying for a few months in an apartment in Madrid, and a kind Spanish man would come to our house and teach his language to my twin brother, my mother, and myself. He only spoke in Spanish. There was no cross translating to English; rather, he would make small drawings in a humble journal. Bicicleta, pan, queso, galleta... little drawings slowly crowded the page.

I remember being overwhelmed thinking, "how am I supposed to remember all these little pieces and communicate a complete sentence?" Little did I know that this crowded page of little drawings would soon become automatic. I could soon use the words to order lunch, joke with a Spanish-speaking friend, or appreciate the Spanish culture.

With each chapter in this workbook, your "page" has been crowded with similar "drawings". You're in the place to begin to think fluently about your marketing strategy. You can now ask questions like

- "How else might I use that content?"
- "Who will see it?"
- "Is this coming from an empathetic or anxious place in me?"
- "What journey do I need to nurture to help them commit?"

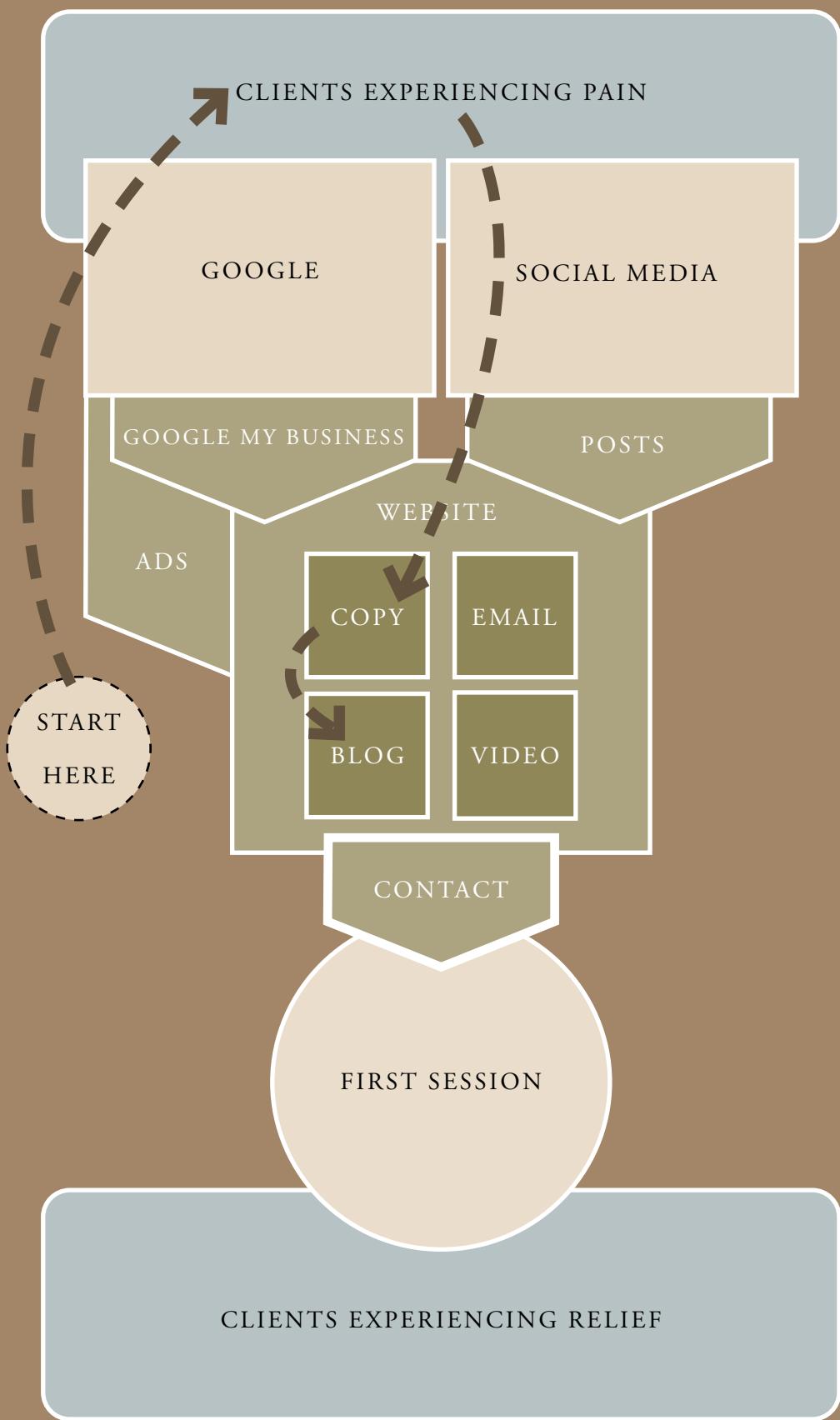
In this chapter you'll learn to think holistically about your marketing strategy.

6

HOURS  
MAKE A PLAN

YOU'LL MOVE FROM SPANISH II  
CLASS TO DON QUIXOTE

# MASTERY



# MASTERY

## LET'S DO THIS FROM THE TOP

Remember our game board? The entire goal of marketing is to help people know and trust that you are the person who can provide relief to their pain. We've outlined the individual components that help bridge that gap, and now we're going to walk through a case example start to finish. Let's go step by step.



**Clients Experiencing Pain.** Let's visualize our client's pain (very top square). She's a lawyer, unsure of herself, has trouble sleeping, is terribly anxious about work. She overworks as a way of telling herself she's valuable. She wishes she could stop working at a reasonable time, and wonders if she could even get a promotion if she could advocate for herself. She wants to trust that people already like her without her working so hard to be useful to others. I can feel this - the empathetic space we share together around her pain.



**Copy.** I'm going to start by moving to the "Copy" square. I'll open up my profile webpage and directory profile.

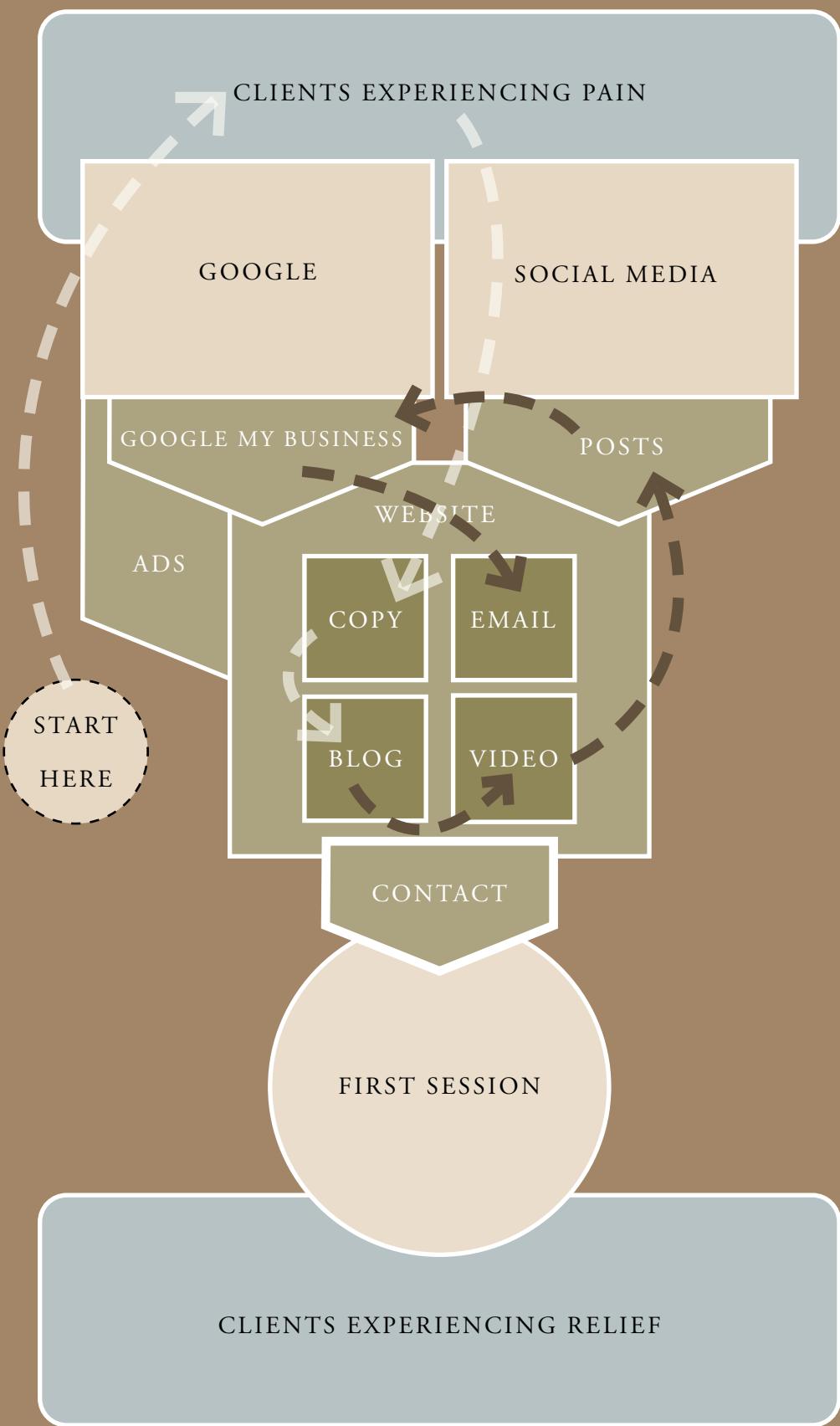
- I make sure language about her specific pain is evident in the first sentence
- I make sure I communicate what she wishes for most
- I give her a clear idea of what to expect in therapy
- I tell her what to do to get my help
- I update the copy on my profile and directory listing



**Blog.** After clarifying the copy, I look to write 3 blog articles. I close my eyes and think of my client's daily struggles. Her sleep issues come to mind. I brainstorm 3-5 blog articles addressing her sleep issues and how they're related to anxiety:

- 3 Sleep Hygiene Tips for Lawyers
- Want to Sleep through the Night? Your Dreams Can be Your Best Teacher
- 5 Ways Billable Hours are Destroying your Sleep and Increasing your Anxiety

# MASTERY



# MASTERY



**Video.** Next I schedule time to film a video. Starting with the blog I feel most excited about, the one about the dreams, I look at the headings of my blog and rehearse my talking points. I set my camera in-front of a bright window, making sure the background, lighting, and sound look good according to the Video chapter, then I picture my client and record the video. I post the video to YouTube, make sure I have an SEO-friendly title, and embed it on my blog article.



**Social Media.** Next, I find 3 different clips of the “dream” video I created that could stand on their own as a social media post. If I can’t find stand alone clips, I might re-record a few short clips from the larger video. I might take more of a playful tone, talk about the positive outcomes (Video Talking Point 02).

Next, I save the videos and plan when I’ll post them, spacing them out a few days. When I post, I write copy that is engaging and focusing on the positive benefits (rest, relief), rather than emphasizing sleeplessness or anxiety.



**Google My Business.** Easiest step so far. I log in to Google My Business and copy and paste the Instagram post into their “Updates” section.



**Email.** I set aside a full day to work on creating a lead generator. I try to think of what I could create that would provide about \$50 of value to my client and address the anxiety/sleeplessness. I decide to create a quiz (I’ve had good success with those) on sleep and stress symptoms. I’m careful to not suggest an anxiety diagnosis.

I set it up so when they complete the quiz they are added to my email service (MailChimp) and sent an email with their quiz results. Then I create one email sequence that provides value concerning sleep and stress, and one that helps them consider therapy. I place clear CTAs at the end of the emails. I double back on social media and promote the quiz bi-weekly for a few weeks.



**Ads.** I skip ads at this point, and wait for my SEO, my social media, and my lead generator to gain traction. In a year or so I might have honed my website, lead generator, and content enough to revisit and start ads.

# MASTERY



**First session.** Here's what's great about having such a well-developed marketing strategy: by the time they come in to the first consultation or session, we will be prepared. I will have deep familiarity with their pain, and the client will already trust I can help. I ask questions to hear their daily experience, and I chart the road ahead for them, tell them what it will cost, and encourage them that change is possible.

From here, the work isn't ever over. In fact, I don't believe it will ever be "passive". It's something I see as my clinical obligation and an integral part of my role. But I can say that after these 6 weeks of intentional work, the rest is much much easier.

Here's what's humming along: My current quiz ads about 2-3 people per day to my email list, which is already built and humming along. My copy is pretty good, although I may continue to tweak it as time yields new perspective. I've hired a social media assistant and blog assistant to help streamline those processes.

Here's what's needing tweaking: Blogs won't write themselves, and I want my face in our practice's videos, so I need to continue to set aside time to create content. I meet occasionally with a Google representative to talk through paid ad changes, and sometimes will add new pages to our website to broaden our reach.

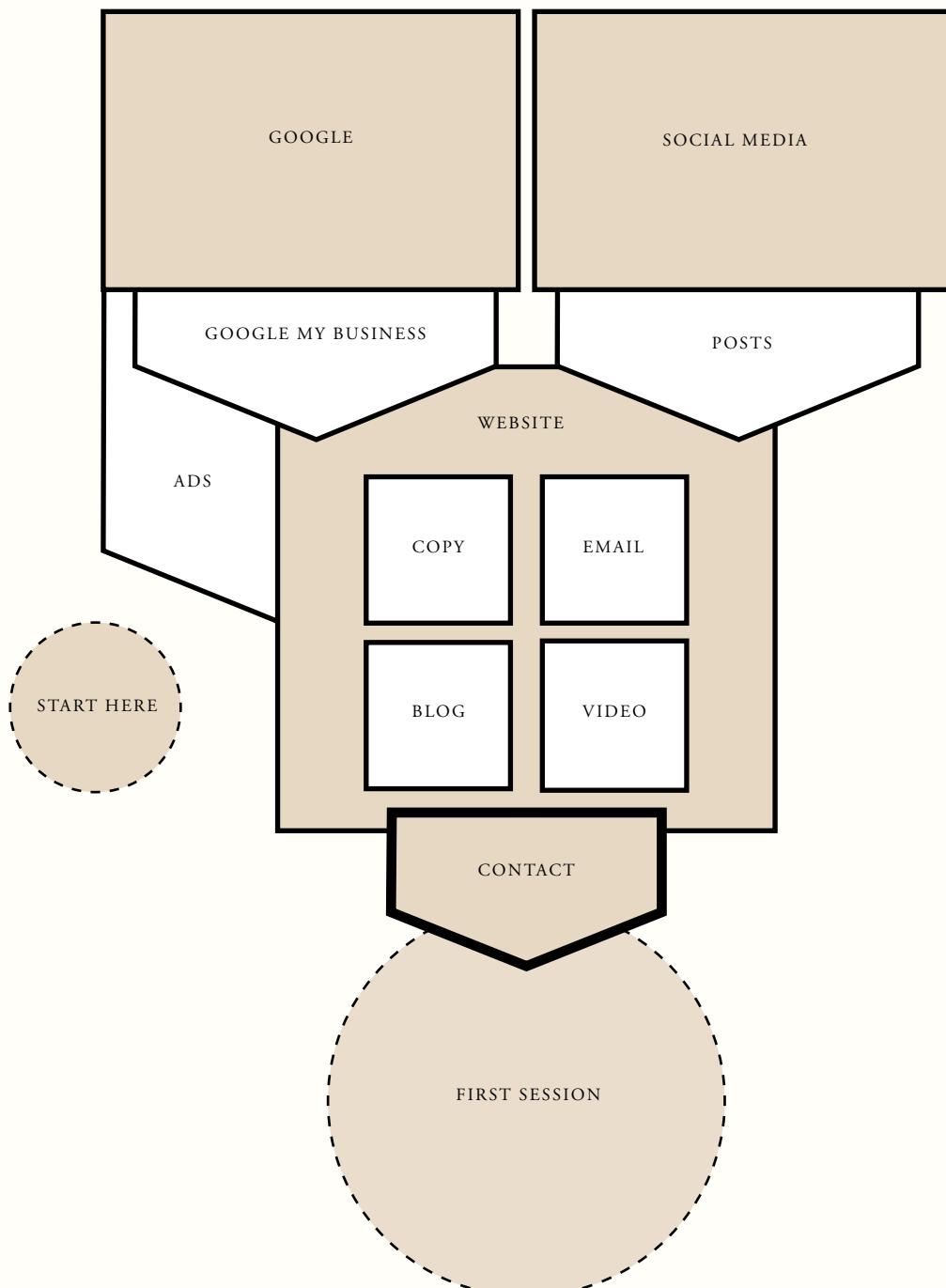
The work is ongoing, but at this point - just like speaking Spanish - it takes less effort. I have a visual map of the things that need work, and also the things that are functioning well.

## NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

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On the next page, write out all the pieces you've been working on over the course of this workbook. What's working? What gaps could you fill in? This is a chance to think about your overall strategy.

# MASTERY



12

CONGRATULATIONS

# CONGRATULATIONS

## YOU HAVE THE TOOLS YOU NEED

I think about the amount of classes you've taken, the hours you've been training for licensure, and the hours spent figuring out private practice and starting a business.

Yet even before that, we can recognize the significant events in your life that led you to become a therapist. The relationships that told you you needed to pay extra attention to the needs of others, also the people who paid attention to you, who showed you care. Maybe there are others who encouraged you through your graduation and in starting a business.

And mostly, we recognize YOU. How you've pushed hard to create a certain life for yourself. The ways you didn't give up. I think about the vision you created for yourself at the start of this workbook. You worked hard to push toward a vision for your life that gives you purpose and fulfillment - one that expresses beauty and connection.

## IT'S TAKEN COURAGE AND GRIT TO GET TO WHERE YOU ARE

You've worked hard getting through these pages. You've spent hours reflecting and learning. You've developed a skill that will take you far in your private practice. You have what it takes to achieve your life's vision.

Thank you for taking me on the ride with you and allowing me to be part of your journey.

*Connor McClenahan*