

Ten Start-Up Tips for a Private Practice

Clinical social workers frequently open a solo or group private practice to provide mental health services. There are several start-up items clinical social workers should incorporate into their new psychotherapy practice. Helpful tools to get started include the following:

Tips

TEN START-UP TIPS
FOR CLINICAL
SOCIAL WORKERS IN
A PRIVATE PRACTICE



National Association of Social Workers

SOCIALWORKERS.ORG

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1. **A CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK LICENSE IN THE STATE IN WHICH ONE PLANS TO PRACTICE.** The following link provides information about licensure in each state: ASWB.org
2. **MALPRACTICE INSURANCE.** NASW members can obtain information about and sign up for malpractice insurance online at NASWAssurance.org/pli/professionals.php
3. **A NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFICATION (NPI) NUMBER.** Apply for the NPI online at nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/StaticForward.do?forward=static.npistart or call 800.465.3202.
4. **A TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER FOR THE PRIVATE PRACTICE.** The application is online at [IRS.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Taxpayer-Identification-Numbers-\(TIN\)](http://IRS.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Taxpayer-Identification-Numbers-(TIN))
5. **A LIST OF CURRENT PROCEDURAL TERMINOLOGY CODES TO IDENTIFY SERVICES PROVIDED.** A list of available codes for use by clinical social workers can be found at the following link SocialWorkers.org/assets/secured/documents/practice/clinical/ppnewcodes.pdf
6. **A LIST OF INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES CODES, 9TH EDITION, CLINICAL MODIFICATION (ICD-9-CM), TO IDENTIFY DIAGNOSES.** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provides a list at CMS.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD9ProviderDiagnosticCodes/index.html?redirect=/ICD9ProviderDiagnosticCodes/
7. **A SET OF CMS-1500 FORMS TO SUBMIT CLAIMS.** Visit the government printing office online at BookStore.gpo.gov or call 202.512.1800.
8. **FORMS.** See the following NASW products: Sample HIPAA Privacy Forms and Policies, SocialWorkers.org/hipaa/sample.asp?back=yes; and *Prudent Practice: A Guide to Malpractice Risks* by Mary Kay Houston-Vega & al, NASWPress.org/publications/bestbuys/prudent-practice.html
9. **ENROLLMENT IN PROVIDER PANELS FOR VARIOUS INSURANCE COMPANIES.** See the following NASW products and links: *Managed Care Panels With Provider Panels for Clinical Social Workers*, SocialWorkers.org/practice/clinical/2011/0711a.asp; *Enrolling in Medicare as a Clinical Social Work Provider*, SocialWorkers.org/assets/secured/documents/practice/clinical/WKF-MISC-38710.ClinicalSW.pdf; and *Becoming a State Medicaid Provider*, SocialWorkers.org/practice/clinical/csw0504b.pdf
10. **REFERENCE GUIDES.** Secure the following documents, *Clinical Social Workers in Private Practice: A Reference Guide*, NASWPress.org/publications/brochures/clinical-sw.html, *Third-Party Reimbursement for Clinical Social Work Services*, NASWPress.org/publications/clinical/3rd-party.html; *NASW Standards for Clinical Social Work in Social Work Practice*, SocialWorkers.org/practice/standards/NASWClinicalSWStandards.pdf

Other resources for clinical social workers are also available from NASW online at SocialWorkers.org/practice/clinical/default.asp