

Questions To Consider Asking When Joining A Group Practice

Adapted From: Walfish, S. & Barnett, J. (2009) *Financial success in mental health practice*. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.

1. What are the values of the practice?
2. What are the vehicles of criticism for what takes places in the practice?
3. How does the practice fit into the larger community? What is its reputation?
4. What will the benefit be to me in joining the practice?
5. What will be the benefit be to the practice by my joining?
6. What is the history or evolution of the practice? What phases has it gone through? Have their periods of growth? Periods of constriction?
7. What is it about me compared to other people that have been interviewed which makes me an attractive applicant to join the practice?
8. Has anyone previously left the practice? If so, what were the circumstances?
9. If the group is multidisciplinary is there a power difference amongst the different disciplines?
10. How do practice associates relate to practice partners/owners?
11. What is the timetable for me joining the practice?
12. How quickly could I expect to develop a full-time practice?
13. What is the referral base of the practice? Are there specific contracts to the practice that provide clients?
14. How will other people in the practice react to my joining? Is there competition for referrals? What has happened historically when a new member has joined the practice?
15. What happens if there are perceived ethical conflicts within the practice?
16. How are internal conflicts handled in the practice?
17. What is the near-term and long-term vision for the practice? Do practice associates share in the development of this vision or is this solely decided by the practice owners/partners?
18. What is the process for adding new members of the practice? What avenues are there for professional growth within the practice?
19. How are resources spent in the practice? How are decisions made about spending resources? What happens when resources are tight?
20. Are the fees set by the practice or do I set my own fees?

21. What are the hours available to see clients? What type, if any, of support staff is available after hours (e.g., weekends, evenings)?
22. What type of emergency coverage is available for when I am not available or I am out of town?
23. What resources are provided to me as part of my contribution to overhead? Does this include receptionist support, secretarial, office supplies, telephone, long distance costs related practice activities, office supplies, photocopying, psychological tests, etc.?
24. What are the billing and collection practices of the practice? What happens if someone does not pay their bill? Are insurance benefits verified by support staff?
25. What is the success rate of collecting fees charged?
26. Is everyone in the practice a provider for the same insurance companies? Do I have to take insurance? Can I be selective in which insurance I take?
27. What happens to my practice and place in the practice if I go on maternity or paternity leave?
28. How much of my practice should I be expected to generate and how much can help can I expect from the practice?
29. Is there a minimal amount of practice hours that is expected of me?
30. Is there a maximum number of hours that I may be allowed to practice?
31. Are there limitations in how I practice? The type of work I do or clients seen?
32. How does income generated outside of direct clinical practice within the practice fit into the equation?
33. Are there limitations as to where else the clinician can also practice?
34. What is the financial solvency of the practice? Have they ever had difficulty meeting their financial obligations?
35. How are clinicians paid? Does the practice collect all monies and then pay the clinician once or twice per month or does the clinician collect all monies and then pay the practice once per month?
36. Will I have my own office or do I have to share an office with others? Will I have to “float” to use offices that are available?
37. If I have my own office will I have to furnish the office or will it be furnished for me? If furnished for me do I have a say in what it looks like?
38. How does an associate become a partner in the practice? How long does it typically take to become a partner and what are the expectations of associates and partners?