Beginnings

Private Practice for Animals. Over 25 years ago, a local physician led me to study alternative modalities and complementary medicine. Today I am a Healing Touch practitioner as well as a Reiki master, working in private practice to help both humans and animals. Most often, the work with the animal leads to something that the person needs to know or to work on as well.

Eight years ago, a boxer named Gypsy entered my life. When she was about two years old, Gypsy became pregnant, and we decided to keep one of her two puppies. We named the puppy Jelly. About that time, I completed a guided journey and found that the magic of my childhood was connected to a Boxer that I had as a child. Gypsy and Jelly seemed to bring that magic back to me.

For the past seven years, I have used a combination of intuitive wisdom and various energy techniques to promote a blending of holistic health care and traditional medicine in order to help animals heal from injuries, stress, training, or behavior problems. In my private practice, I offer in-person and phone (long-distance) consultations, workshops on various aspects of caring for pets, training sessions in Reiki, and speaking engagements. What I have learned by doing this work with Jelly and Gypsy is how to enhance the healing process, recognizing that it does not replace traditional medicine nor veterinary care, diagnosis, or treatment.


One Nurse’s Path. When my children were in school and I had more time for just me, I felt a churning desire to creatively express myself in the professional world. I was sure that nursing was my calling. When I finished my master’s degree in transpersonal studies and started my nontraditional private nursing practice, I began to feel like I was on the right path as a practicing healer. Currently, I am a holistic nurse and transpersonal counselor. I see clients who are in crisis due to illness, injury, or stressful life situations. First, I support their strengths and ideologies according to their beliefs, and then I help them learn more about the inner dimensions of their being. As my practice has expanded, I also have created an online journal, The Alternative Journal of Nursing (www.altjn.com), and my own radio show, “It’s in the Cards.” Years ago, my friend and contact with the Oregon Board of Nursing told me, “You are not an alternative nurse. You are a nurse who practices alternative therapies.” She was right. By practicing outside the walls of institutions, I have been able to use energy work, guided imagery, Tarot, astrology, dream interpretation, and other esoteric tools, all of which I see as alternative ways of using my nursing education. More importantly, I am wholly satisfied and wouldn’t change a thing.

— Toni Gilbert RN, MA, HNC, Jefferson, Ore.
Breathe!! First step — breathe! Work through the fear and trust yourself that you can do this. We are a very smart profession and have handled other people's lives very well. Now it is our turn!

Free resources are available from SCORE, a partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration that has volunteer business men and women who will mentor you through the process of writing business plans, market analysis, and much more; its Web site (www.score.org) has templates to help you get started.

Then be sure to investigate state/county/city regulations regarding the scope of your practice. Understand the community in which you reside, become familiar with peers, and organize meetings/groups to network. Also consider working with other professionals in your field to change legislation regarding the scope of practice to be more inclusive of modalities. Finally, find a mentor and be a mentor — pay it forward and the rewards will follow. Good luck on your journey!

— Laura Zimmerman, Long Branch, N.J.

Slow Growth. My holistic nursing/massage therapy/clinical aromatherapy practice is a work in progress. Just when I think business is picking up, it goes back into stagnation mode. Even though I always feel like I’m beating my head against the wall when trying to promote my business to the allopathic healthcare and business communities, I try never to lose sight of why I do what I do. With complementary modalities slowly gaining acceptance, we all need to remember why we chose to do them and not compromise our principles for corporate health (disease) care. What we do is too important to be controlled by mainstream thought. I freely accept slow growth for the opportunity to provide my clients with the care they richly deserve.

— Ann Lumbrezer RN, LMT, HNC, Berkey, Ohio