



SEO Simplified^{!!!}

FOR THERAPISTS AND COACHES

5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY TO DRIVE TRAFFIC
TO YOUR WEBSITE AND GET MORE CLIENTS



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HEY THERE!

So, you've got yourself a website? Congrats! That's VERY exciting.

Now let's get that baby working for you. You want it to fill your practice with super motivated, cash-paying clients, right? Well, the good news is that it's not too difficult.

To harness your website's full potential, you'll need to focus on driving traffic to it. Website traffic is both an important indicator and a driver of business growth. When more people start clicking on your website, Google begins to acknowledge that you're a credible source for information. Then Google starts putting you higher and higher on search results, making it easier for people to find you and thus filling your practice.

Google is pretty savvy. It knows when you're bringing quality traffic to your website and when you're not. Google will only see your site as credible if your engagement and conversion stats are good. Engaged website visitors interact with your site and stick around longer. Conversion happens when someone completes a pre-determined and desired action on your website, like signing up for a newsletter, sharing a blog post to social media, or filling out a form.

There are many ways to optimize your website, including using calls to action, having straightforward and intuitive navigation, providing information your visitors are seeking, and making sure your site is readable. But the first step is to attract the right visitors to your site in the first place. That is, those who are most likely to convert into clients.

Unfortunately, there isn't a set-it-and-forget-it tool that generates free and high-quality website traffic to your website. Rather, there exists a mix of channels that work together to drive visitors. Some require effort, some require time, and some require money.

This guide will detail the most effective (and reliable) ways of increasing website traffic for free. I have chosen strategies that I think work best for therapists and coaches.



#1 GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

Your Google My Business listing is a great place to focus your early efforts if you're just getting started with search engine optimization. A Google My Business account ensures that they find it when someone looks your company up on Google Search and Google Maps. Once they do, your listing shows searches essential information about your business.

When someone searches for you, you show up on page one—not page two or worse. So, a Google My Business account improves your local SEO because it ensures you get top results.

Here's how to add a Google My Business Listing:

Step 1: Log in to the Google Account you want to be associated with your business (or create a Google Account if you don't already have one).

Step 2: Go to google.com/business and select "Start now" in the top right-hand corner.

Step 3: Enter your business name and address.

Step 4: If you go to your clients, rather than having them come to you, check the box "I deliver goods and services to my customers" and select your delivery area. If you work out of your house or another address, you don't want publicly shown, check "Hide my address (it's not a store) Only show region."

Step 5: Choose your business category. You're telling Google which type of customers should see your business listing, so try to choose the most accurate category possible.

Step 6: Add your business phone number and website.

Step 7: Choose a verification option. Just choose whichever is easier for you.

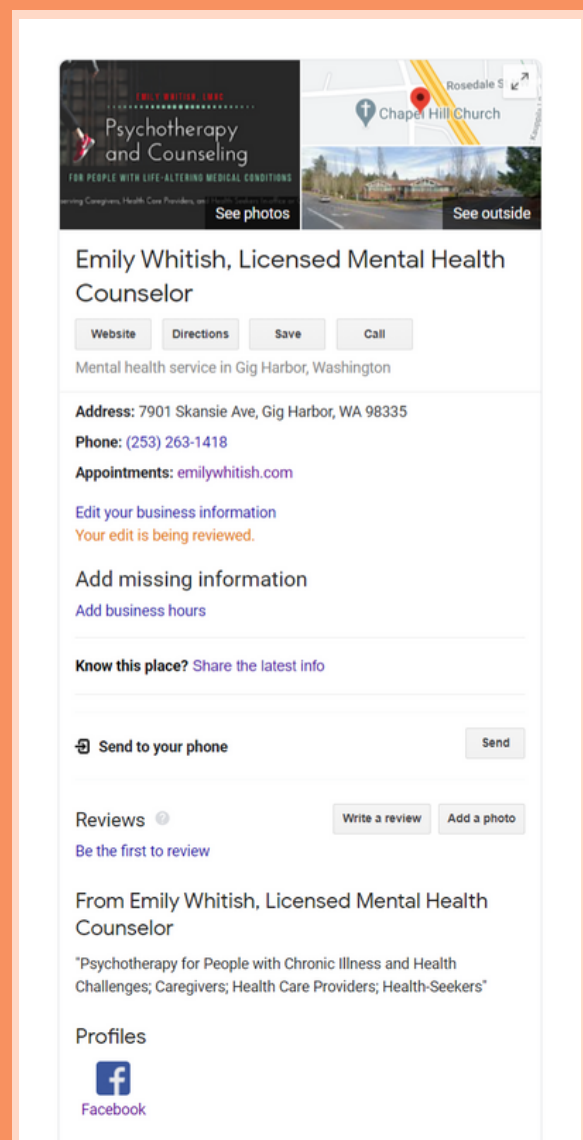
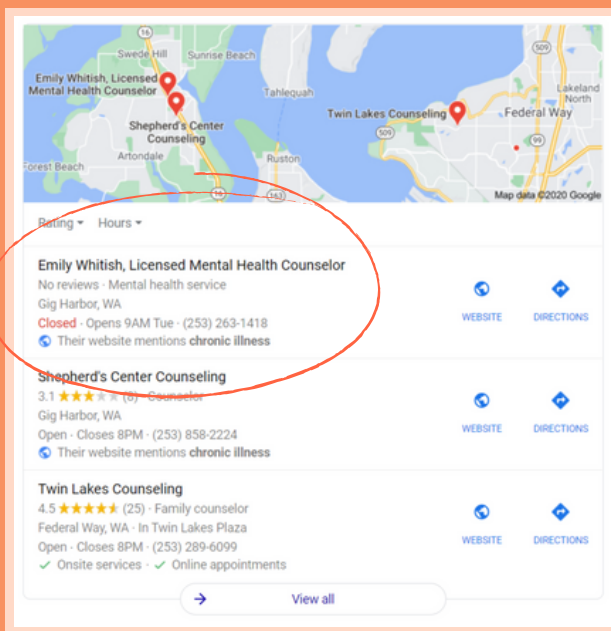
Step 8: Add more information to your listing. Go to your Google My Business dashboard, click the listing you'd like to work on, select "Info," and then choose a section to fill out or update.

Add as much information and media as you can, including a business profile photo, the area you serve, your hours, attributes (e.g., "wheelchair accessible," "free WIFI"), the day and year you opened, and a public phone number and website URL.

Anyone can "suggest an edit" to your listing, so it's crucial to get everything right the first time (so you don't encourage random people to make changes). It's also a good idea to periodically log into your dashboard and make sure all the details look right.

According to Google, businesses with photos see 35% more clicks to their website and 42% higher requests for driving directions in Google Maps. Photos should be at least 720 pixels wide by 720 pixels tall and JPG or PNG files. You can add photos of yourself, the outside of your office building, and your office space.

Here's what shows up when you have a Google My Business listing:





#2 KEYWORDS

Generally speaking, the best way to improve the performance of your website is to make sure that you are publishing content that people are actually searching for.

Most SEO experts will tell you to use a keyword research tool. These tools let you enter keywords and provide you with stats for each one. You'll learn what keywords people are using to search for content like yours, the volume of search for each of those keywords, and how difficult it will be to rank for each keyword. These tools are very useful, but if you're just starting out, they may not be necessary. Plus, they are hard to understand without the help of an SEO expert (or great online article) to help you interpret the stats.

For the sake of keeping this simple, let's just focus on keywords that most therapists and coaches in private practice will need to focus on. I'll help you compile a list of keywords to include now and where to put them. But keep in mind that this method may not replace good, quality keyword research.

As you read through the following suggestions, remember this ONE thing: **You are selecting keywords that your ideal clients will use, not the words you think they should use.**

You probably already know that people will type counselor, psychologist, or therapist in the search box when looking for a therapist. And they might type coach, career coach, or life coach when searching for a coach. Other commonly known search terms are counseling, therapy, psychotherapy, and mental health. Try to use most or all of these on your site.

Why? Because your ideal clients are using them.

By doing this, your website now tells the world that you're a therapist (or coach, counselor, or psychologist, or whatever). You're not a plumber or a designer.





This is great, except that the pool of therapists and coaches you just dropped yourself into is HUGE. You want to be in that pool (that's your pool), but if you want to attract your ideal clients, you will need to separate yourself from others in the pool.

The simple solution is to target keywords related to your niche or specialization. For example, my niche is therapy for people with chronic illness and health challenges. My ideal clients are most likely going to type "therapy for chronic illness" and other related phrases into the search box so I need to make sure these phrases are on my website. Here are some other keywords I might use:

counseling for cancer; coping with chronic illness; chronic illness counseling; chronic illness therapist [my city]; therapy for coping with [diagnosis]

As you can see, I also target keywords that few people are searching for. I do this because the few people looking for that term are my ideal clients!

For example, keyword phrases like counseling after a cancer diagnosis or coping with a terminal illness are not being searched for often, but when they do, I want my website to be found. There's less competition for those phrases so it's very likely my website will be near the top of the search results.

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Brainstorm some keywords for your practice now. Write them here:



WHERE TO PLACE KEYWORDS

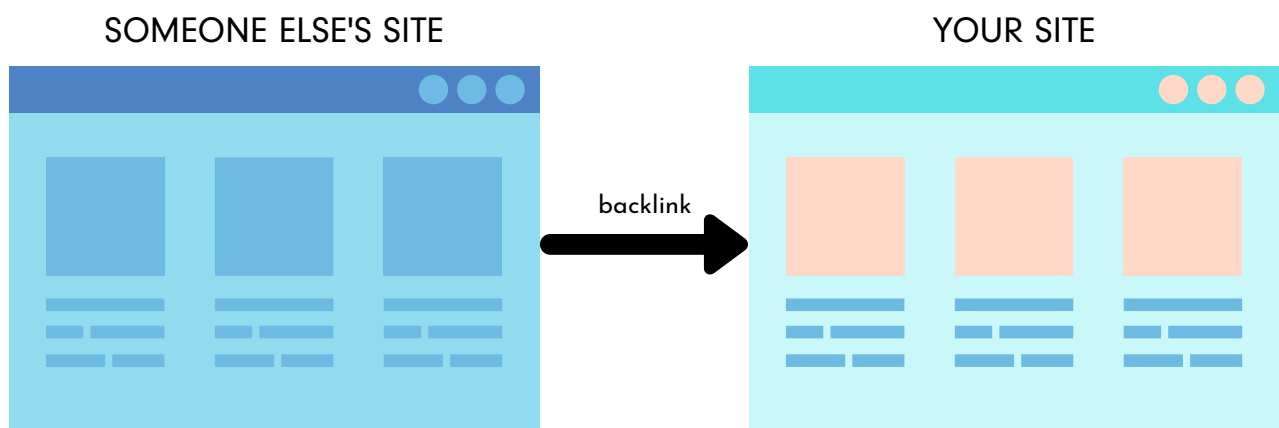
Keywords are not just used in the copy. You might be surprised to know that keywords can be very powerful when they are also used in page titles, URL slugs, and the alt text for your photos. Here's where I recommend you use keywords:

- Page Titles
- Headings and Subheadings
- Meta Descriptions
- SEO Descriptions
- In the Copy (the words on your site)
- Photos
- URL slugs



3 BACKLINKS

What the heck is a backlink, you ask? It's when another website has a link to your site. If there is a link to your website on your Facebook page, that's a backlink. If you've written a post for Psychology Today and your website link is in your bio, that's a backlink.



Remember how I said that Google needs evidence that your site is credible in order to rank it higher? Backlinks are like a "vote of confidence" from one site to another.

If many (or just a few trustworthy, popular, high-authority) sites link to your website, search engines can infer that your site is worth linking to, and therefore will increase your site's ranking position or search visibility.

Here are some great ideas for therapists and coaches for getting started with backlinks:

- Add your website to directories like [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com), [goodtherapy.com](https://www.goodtherapy.com), or [zencare.com](https://www.zencare.com)*
- Guest blog: Write an article for a reputable blog
- Be a guest on a podcast, workshop, or online event: Make sure the topic is relevant to your clinical work and that a link to your site is used in the promotional materials.
- Editorial links: Contribute to local articles or be interviewed by the news. You can use HARO (Help A Reporter Out) to find media outlets.
- If you participate in a speaking gig outside of your business, be sure to include your website URL on your bio on the event's promotional materials.
- Identify referral sources that might have a website. For example, if you work with people with Alzheimer's disease, perhaps the Alzheimer's Association has a directory of resources you could add yourself (and your website URL) to.
- If you notice that one of your regular referral sources has a resource or referral listing on their website, ask if you can add your name and website URL.
- Create high-quality content that's link-worthy. Your goal should be to create a piece of content that other bloggers and industry experts can use and link back to your site. You can write how-to articles, create guides, list posts, and run quizzes.

* To decide whether a paid online directory is worth joining, type into Google the keywords your ideal client might use when searching for someone like you. If you practice in a specific geographic area, add your location to the search terms as well. If a directory doesn't show up on the first page, it's not worth joining. Why? Well, you just proved it. I only recommend joining paid online directories if they have obtained a first-page Google ranking for your specialty or niche. Your ideal client won't even see the directory if it's not on the first page!



#21 BLOGGING

There are a number of reasons blogging is good for SEO. Namely, a high-quality blog:

- Keeps your website fresh and current
- Helps you connect with your audience
- Keeps people on your website for longer
- Helps you target long-tail keywords
- Gives you opportunities for internal linking
- Gives other sites more reasons to link back to your site

BLOGGING TIPS

- When planning and writing your blog articles, ensure they have evergreen content. These are topics that remain relevant and valuable over a long period of time.
- While creating new blog content is important for SEO, you can also repurpose and update existing content and remove outdated content.
- Long-tail keywords (longer, usually question-based phrases) will help you generate the right type of traffic: Visitors who convert. This is because they are more likely to read the whole post and seek more information from you. For example, the long-tail keyword "simple steps to manage anxiety" is much more impactful in terms of SEO than the short keyword "manage anxiety."
- Remember keywords? Yep, you can use them here too. Add those babies to your title tag, headers and body, URL, and meta descriptions. Be careful about keyword stuffing, though - Google doesn't like it. Use a few relevant keywords and use them consistently.
- Focus on meta descriptions. Meta descriptions give searchers the information they need to determine whether or not your content is what they're looking for and ultimately help them decide if they'll click or not. In addition to being reader-friendly (compelling and relevant), your meta description should include the long-tail keyword you are trying to rank.

- Think quality over quantity. Take the time to research your topic and write in-depth posts that connect with your readers. Get into the shoes of your ideal readers and understand their pain points and needs.
- Make sharing easy for your readers. Add social share buttons and compelling calls-to-action so that readers will share your content.
- Make sure your blog is mobile-friendly (or has a responsive design). It's a fact: Most of your readers will be reading from their phones, so make it easy for them to stay on your site.
- Add a blog gallery and links to other content on your blog posts. If you've written about a topic that's mentioned in your blog post on another blog post, ebook, or web page, it's a best practice to link to that page.
- Inbound links to your content help show search engines the validity or relevancy of your content.



#5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media does not directly contribute to SEO ranking, but the links you share across social platforms are a fantastic way to attract more eyes to your site. Social media increases brand recognition and reputation, improves your website's online visibility and organic traffic, and boosts local search engine optimization.

When you create and publish quality content that connects with your target readers, they will read and share it with their friends and followers. Their followers will do the same, and the circle continues.



In addition, social media provides a platform to share the content you have on your website, such as blog posts, videos, or podcasts. When you share this content on your social media feeds, your audience amplifies your content by sharing it further. In this way, you increase visibility, improve traffic, and generate backlinks. These are social signals that notify Google that your site content is AWE-SUUUUUUM.

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM IS BEST?

The best one is the one you enjoy the most. Facebook and LinkedIn tend to rank a bit higher than other platforms, but it will all be for nothing if you aren't engaging with the platform in an in-depth way. I love the visual-focused nature of Instagram, but I get more traffic from Facebook, so I post to Facebook, but I focus more on Instagram.

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS:

- Social channels can feel more personal than web pages, and they're a great way to get a sense of a therapist or coach's personality quickly. Make sure your social media content is compelling, relevant to your ideal visitors, and shows a bit of your personality.
- Maintain consistency across all your content channels, including your social media, blog, and website. Your readers should see consistency with names, logos, colors, fonts, and the brand message.
- When you post on social media sites, use calls-to-action to help your followers share your posts.
- Post topics that will generate a lot of questions and comments. Better yet, ask your audience a compelling question and then do a follow-up post where you highlight your reader's answers, or you answer the question yourself.
- Use all the features offered on social media platforms, like Instagram stories and reels, for example. Using all the features of a platform improves your exposure on the platform itself.

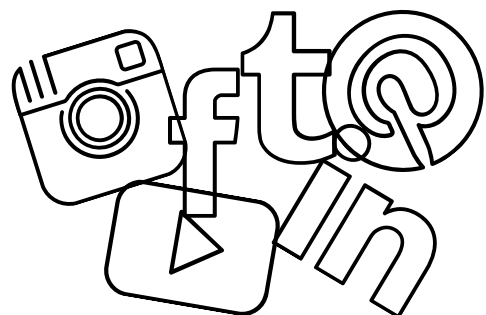
- Don't just follow other therapists. Follow accounts that align with your clinical interests, as well as accounts that your ideal clients might be following.
- This can probably go without saying, but don't like, friend, or follow your clients on social media. And don't accept friend/connection requests from clients on your personal accounts.
- One of the best ways to increase engagement on your social accounts is to build relationships. Engage with your followers, respond to their comments, and ask them questions. Look for questions they might have asked on other platforms and provide helpful answers on yours. Don't wait for them to come to you; take the initiative to interact with them. You'll learn a lot about your target audience, their needs, and what they are struggling with.





NEED CONTENT IDEAS? HERE ARE 10 TO GET YOU STARTED:

1. A quote
2. A mental health tip
3. A psychoeducational post within your clinical focus area
4. A photo of your office
5. A question your ideal client might have
6. A list, such as "5 ways to cope with grief"
7. A video of you teaching a mindfulness exercise or communication strategy
8. Promote a new service or offering
9. Repost someone else's content (be sure to credit and make sure it's relevant)
10. Share your own content, such as a blog post, podcast episode, or interview you conducted
11. Ask a question
12. Take a poll
13. Something you reflected on today
14. A photo of your office
15. Client wins (without identifying information, of course)
16. Create a series of educational content and release one post per day
17. Holiday posts
18. Share a book recommendation
19. Your favorite self-care activities
20. Do a Q&A



Well, there you have it—five tried-and-true strategies for increasing traffic to your website. Your website is an awesome practice-building tool, and these strategies will help you leverage its full power.

Let's summarize a few key points from the strategies above:

- The only way to separate yourself from the massive pool of therapists in your area and increase your website rankings is to provide something other therapists don't. This is where a niche comes in. A well-defined niche will make it so that you don't have to work very hard to get noticed; your keywords and the fact that you are memorable (for being unique) will get you those Google rankings you've been hoping for.
- Focus on high-quality content. Whether posting to social media, writing a blog post, or creating a video, make sure you focus on quality. Content that is interesting to your audience, even if it's infrequent, will benefit your SEO rankings much more than tons of low-quality content. Do your research, be thoughtful, and your audience (and Google) will love you.
- Engage! Other private practitioners might pursue the low-effort game of sharing quotes, updates, and educational content but see little engagement. You have to be, well, engaging if you want to see your audience (and Google rankings) increase. Every day, ask yourself, "How can I connect with my audience (or potential audience) today?"

I hope you found these five strategies helpful - and engaging!





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Next Steps

Pull out your planner and block out a few hours each week that you can dedicate to these five strategies. It's just too easy to put it off!

If you need some more help with blogging, I've created a Guide to a [Killer Blog Strategy](#). And it's just for therapists and coaches. I provide tons of information about blogging best practices and a massive list of blog topic ideas. In addition, I've included an editorial calendar so you can plan your articles.

If you're finding it challenging (or too time-consuming) to design visually stunning social media posts and want to keep your feed on-brand, check out my [Social Media Templates](#). You get 60 therapist and coach-themed designs that are totally customizable. All you have to do is insert your favorite quote or image and share the post! All the design work is done for you, which will save you a ton of time.

Need More Support?

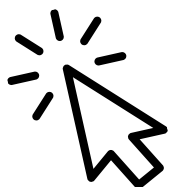


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