

**PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**  
**CPP Ep. 29 Building a Sustainable Private Practice for Christian Counselors**

Camille McDaniel (00:05.452)

Welcome back to another episode. And if you happen to be new here, then welcome. I'm so glad for you to join us and be on this journey with us. Today, we are going to tackle a pretty big challenge. I think one of the biggest challenges, there might be just a couple, but one of the biggest challenges in private practice, and that is sustainability.

Right? So here's the thing, many counselors, you know, we get started in private practice. We're passionate. We have purpose. We are ready to go. We know who we're going to serve. Or at least if we don't know specifically who we're going to serve, we know that we are going to be serving in the mental health field that we studied so long to get into. And we know that we are excited, many of us, to be starting this journey as entrepreneurs.

working for ourselves, being able to set our own schedule. We have all the dreams, right? But over time, we sometimes find ourselves experiencing hardships. We're financially stressed. We're emotionally drained. We're physically exhausted. And so today we're going to talk about how to build a private practice that lasts, not just for the first year.

not just for two or three years, but we want a private practice that is going to last the long haul until the Lord tells us and we feel it is time to pivot, retire, or pivot and do something else. We want a practice that's going to keep its doors open. So we're going to talk today about how to build a sustainable private practice

as a Christian counselor and it's not gonna be all about money. No, I know you're used to that being a conversation but we're actually going to talk about mind, body, spirit and just a little bit as it relates to money. We're gonna do a deeper dive into the financial aspects of a private practice next week. So

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I hope you do come back, listen to the next episode next week. But for today, for today, let's start off with just the foundation of a sustainable private practice. And when we talk about sustainability, again, we're going to first jump right on in to something that I wonder how many have heard this mention.

not just as it relates to self-care, but as it relates to having a sustainable private practice and that is physical health. Your body is part of your business because let's be honest here, you won't have a practice if your body is sick and broken down. Counseling is already

a field that can be very emotionally demanding. And if you're not taking good care of your physical health, it's going to catch up to you. I've seen therapists, I've been therapists, or a therapist who has pushed through, kept going, pulling long hours, you know, working through exhaustion. And I've seen other therapists work until they were sick.

pushing through until they were hospitalized. There's many of us who are not eating well, we're not nourishing our body, we're just grabbing something really quick, really convenient in between sessions, neglecting our overall well-being. And you know what? If we keep down that path, our body is going to force us to stop and recognize

its needs and we don't want our body to auto shut down on us and force us to have to recognize and take care of it. We want to make sure that we are actually being proactive because chronic stress and we all know this in the mental health field we've helped others with this chronic stress weakens your immune system.

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So constantly pushing through for long hours without proper rest, it makes you susceptible to illness. Sitting all day, like what I'm doing right now as I record this podcast, but sitting for six to eight hours a day or however long your day is without getting up, it is poor, poor, poor for your vascular system.

You know, our vascular system, essentially our circulation system, we need to get up, we need to move around. And so you don't wanna power through without taking a break. Take a walk around your office park. Take a walk in your building. If you don't wanna do that, do some stretches right in your office. If you don't mind getting on your floor, if you bring a mat to work, do some pushups, do some sit ups, you know.

Get in a little bit of exercise time so that you're moving around. Some of us have backs that are sore. Some of us have strains and different things that make our body more susceptible to pain. And so we want to do stretches. I am trying to do even better in my own practice with making sure I get up and I walk, or I will stretch, stretch my arms, stretch my back out.

will go ahead, I'll do some lunges, sometimes I'll run in place a little bit because I actually oftentimes even though I have like my you know my dress clothes on, I do like to be comfortable with my footwear and so sometimes I'm wearing Converse sneakers and so that allows me to kind of be running in place or whatever. Hey if you if you have more you know dress shoes that you wear at work, that's okay you can bring a change.

your sneakers with you or take your shoes off, whatever is comfortable for you. But you can do something no matter what the weather, no matter where you are, there are options for making sure that you move around and decrease the risk of us having vascular issues, of us having muscle pains and strains, of us having heart issues, lung issues, those things are actually all impacted.

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by long days filled with just sitting alone. The next thing is our nutrition. When we're talking about our physical wellness, we need to also address our nutrition because poor nutrition is poor energy. And I know many of you know this. I can't stop saying that because you share this information with your clients. So,

If you are somebody who tries to get a lot of your energy through caffeine or through grabbing snacks, know, stuff with a lot of processed food and stuff with a lot of ingredients that really aren't great for our mind or body, you can find yourself eventually crashing out, okay? We wanna make sure to do better. Let me throw something else at you.

Go for your doctor's appointments. Many of us are at a stage in life where we're supposed to be getting certain checkups, certain physicals, certain exams. Are you getting yours? Have you

called to schedule whatever needed exams or physicals you're supposed to be getting at this stage of your life? Don't get behind.

Don't let it be that life all of a sudden happens to you, some ailment pops up and then we start talking about how we're going to make sure to take care of our health and our wellness and all. We don't want to do that. You know recently I actually was taking part doing one of my physicals, you know getting everything taken care of for this stage of my life and for one of them I actually was a little late. I should have gotten it a little earlier in life.

But it's all good. I was, I was there to get my things done and they didn't have a baseline. So I had to actually come back. They wanted me to do another checkup and I had to go to this massive, I didn't actually have to, but this was the building that was available basically first, first appointment available. So I go to the appointment. The first appointment I went to was a nice small cozy

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a place that felt kind of like a spa to me because of the way it was and not a lot of people there. The next place when I had to go back, it was massive. I mean, it was like this humongous, beautiful building, beautiful building, valet parking in the front and there's side parking if you want to park yourselves.

all these people in and out and then when you look at the name on the building it's in this all this beautiful writing and and shining and it's great but I would not necessarily want to have to go to that building because of what it means when you usually are getting served there. So there's a lot of illness, there's a lot of sickness but my goodness it was massive and overwhelming. I walked into the building and it's like this this long line of people that just like check people in. That's how

many people they serve. And then when I finally went to the floor that I was supposed to go on, there was somebody who was actually there around the same time and I guess also going to the same place that I was going to. And the person who was guiding us was saying, and so when you come back, you know, just know this is where you'll go for this and this is what you'll do over here. And this is how it's set up just so that when you come back, you actually, you know, just are familiar. And after they finished, I said, respectfully.

I hope to never have to come back. And the person who was behind me, I didn't know who they were, but they were like, yeah, yeah, just kind of looking around because it really hits you when you are in certain spaces and you see certain things, how we sometimes take for granted our good health. And thankfully, after that checkup, the doctor gave me the all clear.

I didn't have to come back, things were looking great and I was on my way, but there were many individuals who possibly did not get that diagnosis that day or had previously been given a diagnosis and were there for treatment. So we want to make sure that we are taking care of our physical health with our movement, with our nutrition, with our rest.

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with our doctor's visits because a person who doesn't have their health doesn't have their business really. I mean you have to stop seeing clients. You have to put things on pause and if you happen to be a solopreneur, if you are the only one there in your practice and you stop seeing clients well then money is not coming into the practice and therefore you are not able to sustain things that need to be sustained.

Right? So we want to make sure that by all means we are taking steps and we are remembering what the Bible says in first Corinthians. When it says, you not know that your

body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within you? Remember that we are walking temples and we want to make sure that we are taking good care and stewarding our temple well.

Okay, so then let's take another look. What's something else that helps us to be sustainable in private practices outside of physical health? Well, it is your emotional sustainability, your emotional wellness. And we have to make sure we are protecting our emotional energy. And let's talk about that because if you're emotionally drained,

You're not going to be able to really serve your clients well. How can you? But are you aware of the signs that you are headed toward burnout? Or maybe if you're already there, it's time for you to turn things around. But are you feeling exhausted, even when the day starts? So you have a full night of sleep, you get up.

You're ready for the day, but you feel totally tired. Like you can lay right back down and get more sleep. Or are you struggling because of things that you are, you know, supporting in your counseling room? Are you struggling with compassion, fatigue? That's a big thing for a lot of mental health professionals. Are you resenting your schedule even? Are you finding yourself dreading sessions and not necessarily because

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of your clients but when you just look at your schedule and your calendar, this overwhelming heaviness just is on you because you know you have to try to make it through the day. Are you even maybe feeling distant in your prayer time, distant from the Lord? You're so mentally drained and emotionally exhausted that you don't even really feel that you have the energy

to pray, to study, to just hang out with the Lord. Well, if you identify with any of that, if that resonates with you in any way, then you want to make sure that you are protecting your emotional being, your emotional state. And here's what you're going to start thinking about. Set limits on the number of clients that you're seeing in a week.

Now, I'm not going to give you a number specifically because everybody's life looks different. There are some individuals who have the opportunity to just see a multitude of clients throughout the week and they don't necessarily have to worry about taking care of any other dependents or other individuals outside of serving their clients. And then there are some individuals who have a very full life with dependents.

and with maybe some parents who are dependents and children who are dependents and spouses and other obligations. so everybody's life looks different, but what you need to do is take a look at your own life personally and decide how many clients can I realistically see in a week and how many clients is too much for me in one day.

We all have that number. You know when you're pushing it. You know when you look at that calendar. You've been there where you looked and said, why did I do that? What was I thinking? Okay, well, this is gonna be a day. Don't do that to yourself regularly. Don't. It will burn you out. Be very realistic and honest with yourself and remember that if you are seeing too many clients, that it might be time

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to pivot the way you are serving God's people because you don't have to only do one-on-one sessions. That's not the only way to build a business. And so if you find yourself stuck and not really sure, well, what else can I do? Well, how else, what are you talking about? Then you can talk to me, I'd love to help you. And we can do some business consulting on how you might be able to do something a little bit different, all right? The next thing is,

Take mental health days, take breaks. You need the time off. So in all of your planning, have you planned for taking a break? Or do you again, just continue to push through? Another thing we wanna make sure to do as we're taking care of our emotional health, which allows us to be sustainable in our private practice is to have a support system.

So whether that's a supervisor, you might have a mentor, you might have a therapist for yourself, you might have another group that is supporting you, you might have business coaching, you might have a number of ways that you're getting support, but you need to have support. If you don't have it right now, start small, build up, but meet your need, okay? Make sure that you are guarding your spiritual life. That's another thing that helps us.

emotionally. So like we talked about before, if you're experiencing burnout and you find that you don't even have time to really talk to the Lord, spend time and hang out with him, read your Bible, study, you know, then you have to guard that time a lot better. Your time with God is not negotiable, okay?

And there are many different ways. I know for some people early morning is great, for other people early morning is hectic. There have been times where I have really had to say, my goodness, know, there's so many things going on right now that can't be moved around, you know, family or whatever other things. And so I have listened to the Bible sometimes as I am writing the work. Now I actually have a good little drive when I go into the office. And so

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I actually have listened to the Bible as I am driving and then I definitely usually have like praise and worship in the car when I'm going to work. And so, you know, those are ways for me to have time to myself in my car by myself to be able to hang out with the Lord, spend time with him. But you know, outside of those times, you know, what are the times maybe when you're in the office, you actually block out an hour, block out a block out an hour and a half.

Take that time for praise, for worship, for study, know, make sure that that time does not get crowded out by everything else that you have going on in your life. Because we have, we know that we have to make him first because he is our source and we gotta make time for our relationship with him.

The next thing that we're going to talk about as far as sustainability, it goes back to what I said, hey, meet me next week for an in-depth discussion about it. But for today, financial stability. You know, hey, financial stability is about charging for longevity and not just for survival. Did everybody just hear that?

We are going to make sure we are setting fees appropriately because we are charging for longevity, not just survival, right? So let's talk briefly. Remember, like I said, you know, come back next week and all of that good stuff. But hey, here's the thing. If you don't have the income coming in, you can't keep your doors open. You can't serve if you're always worried about

How am I going to pay this bill? How am I going to pay myself? How are we going to meet this training need? I don't make enough money. You know, we're going to have to make sure that one, like I said, you charge appropriately for your services. The Lord knows clearly that we are in a world where there are services that then are exchanged for money, right?

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And I know that for us as Christians, sometimes that gets to be really difficult because we have a gift we want to serve and we don't want for people to not be able to afford our services. But

again, remember you can serve people who can absolutely pay your fee and you can serve people who may not be able to pay your fee. It's all in how you structure your business.

But if you don't charge appropriately, you will not be any good to yourself or to anyone else in your community or in your family because you will never have enough in order to provide for others. You know, we are to actually help serve the poor. Well, we can serve the poor, that is true, without money, but we all live in the real world and you know food costs money.

You know clothes cost money. To get people those things, you're going to have to have some money somewhere. Yes, you can get donations and those are wonderful, but those don't run the whole operation. You are going to need to think about money in a way that is not the misrepresentation that I sometimes hear of the Bible scripture. And I know that you will know what I'm talking about really when I say it.

that money is the root of all evil and right right you got it that's not what the bible actually says it doesn't say money is the root of all evil it says the love of money is the root of all evil why because the love of money means that you have made money your god and you are doing all things to get more of this money to serve money only money purposes

But making money, there's nothing wrong with that. We don't have to worship money. We're not worshipping money. We know our help comes from the Lord. We know that everything that we have from referrals to anything else in our business is coming from the Father. And so money is just a tool that we use in order to meet our needs, our family's needs, our community needs, and even our client needs because

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As we charge appropriately, we can then have policies in our practice that allow us to then serve those who are maybe low income or no income, underserved, underprivileged in multitude of ways and still keep our doors open. All right. You have to also make sure that you are tracking money. You have to know what is coming into your business and you have to know what is going out.

We can't just kind of put our head in the sand when it comes to that. We have to know what's going on. Every business has its highs and lows. So the other thing that we have to do too when it comes to being financially sustainable is we have to plan for the highs and the lows and the different seasons that occur in private practice. And we all know.

It starts getting a little dicey toward the last quarter of the year as people start wrapping it up and getting ready for the holidays and they're traveling and all of that. And same thing with the summertime. Kids get out of school and people start going places, visiting family and all of that. Even in a down economy, people still find time to sometimes take a break and all of that for themselves. And we need a plan for that, especially for those of us who serve the wounded well.

those individuals who could go a couple of weeks without seeing you. Maybe they could take off for vacation, you know, and go without seeing you and then come back. Now for those of us who are working to support and meet the needs of clients who are struggling with some higher level care needs and some pretty serious mental health challenges, those clientele may not always be able to take off that time.

Matter of fact, if they did go without proper counseling support for a long period of time, you might see a sharp decline in their overall mental health and wellness. And so no matter what your practice design and who you serve, you have to account for that, okay? Remember, you won't always be in a space to say, well, I'll just take on a few more clients. You won't.

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always be in a space to say well I'll just take on another job or I'll just do this or I'll just do that. There will be a time for all of us where our bodies just slow down a little bit, shift a little bit. It won't always be the case where we can just always make up for it. Well could just start this new business or I'll start this new thing or I'll go over here and I'll get this new job and I'll just there'll be a time where we will be possibly still busy and

be working, we'll be at older stages of life though, so it'll look a little different, and we will be largely living off of what we built for ourselves today, right now. And so stability, sustainability, sustainability means a lot. It's a body, mind, spirit,

financial approach to taking care of ourselves, our families, our communities, our clients now, and even who we will be in later stages of life. So I hope, I hope that something in this episode resonated with you. And if you are wondering, if you're like, gosh, yeah, not only did it resonate, but I don't even know where to start.

I have so many pieces I have to put together, I don't even know where to start. If you're wondering how to build a practice that's going to last without burning out, I would love to help you, you know I would. So reach out to me for a consultation session and reach out at [www.christinprivatepractice.com](http://www.christinprivatepractice.com) and on the website, on the homepage actually.

you will see a place to click if you are interested in business consultation and then we can kind of talk about and we can create a sustainable practice that also obviously honors God and the business model that works for you. Also, I would love to see you in the Facebook group. We're over there at Christ in Private Practice. Just look us up.

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Join, don't forget to answer the questions to get into the group. And we have resources in there, you know, we chat and hopefully you can be a part of that as well. All right, it's been wonderful talking with you. Comment, share, ask questions, join the Facebook group. And until next time, God bless.